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ABSTRACT

This book examines flexible delivery of vocational education and training in Australia's technical and further education (TAFE) sector. Discussed in chapter 1 are issues in the invention and implementation of flexible delivery with general reference to Victoria's TAFE sector, vocational education and training, and selected precursors of flexible delivery. Chapter 2 reports a case study of off-campus teaching at six TAFE colleges that were selected to include a mix of small, medium, and large urban and rural institutions and a mix of styles of managing flexible delivery (management by dedicated off-campus centers, individual teaching departments with academic responsibility for particular courses/modules, or a combination of dedicated center- and department-based management). The findings regarding student support services, administrative services, open learning and off-campus services, course production and development, off-campus centers and departments, institutional and cross-college arrangements, teachers and modes of instruction, and use of technology that are presented in chapter 2 provide empirical evidence that implementation of flexible delivery is not living up to its promises of equity and openness. Chapter 3, "Off-Campus Study Meets Entrepreneurialism," considers global issues shaping the organization and practice of flexible delivery. The book contains a 59-item annotated bibliography and 66 references. (MN)

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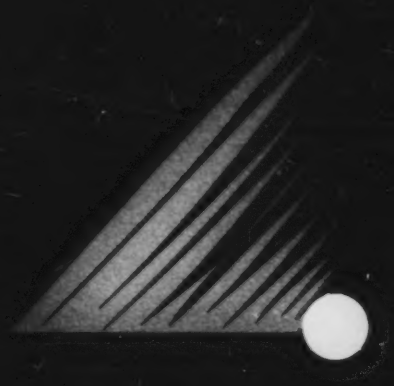

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Commercialisation and Flexible Delivery:
Access in Vocational Education and Training

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CHAPTER I

Invention and Implementation of Flexible Delivery: General Issues

Introduction

Vocational education and training are undergoing profound changes in both aspiration and mode of provision. One of the primary advocacies in the sector globally is for 'flexible delivery'. The origins of the idea of flexible delivery are several, but a key source is the notion of 'off-campus' study which offered students the advantages of tuition which was independent of time and place. Students could study anywhere at any time. Flexible delivery is a more modern aspiration and it too promises unprecedented opportunity for access to education and training. This aspiration has inspired the use of an extensive array of information and communications technologies which in turn began to have appeal in curriculum and teaching far beyond the traditional conceptualisations of off-campus study. Many advocates of 'flexible delivery' are starry-eyed about its prospects, as if the invention and implementation of new ways of interacting with students occurred in a socio-cultural vacuum, where new opportunities were *added* for everyone. We acknowledge that the idea of 'flexible delivery' has remarkable potential, like the many pedagogical fashions which have preceded it. However, we are much more cautious about the realisation of its potential and about current practices than some of its advocates. In this book we present empirical evidence and arguments which indicate that 'flexible delivery' implementation in current cultural and political conditions is not living up to its promises of equity and openness.

The book is presented in four chapters:

- An initial discussion of issues in the invention and implementation of 'flexible delivery' with general reference to the Victorian TAFE sector, vocational education and training, and some precursors of flexible delivery.
- A case study of 'off-campus' study in several Victorian Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges.
- An analysis of some of the global issues shaping the way in which this traditional form of flexible delivery is being organised and practised.
- An annotated bibliography of flexible delivery.

The issues discussed in this Chapter are mainly about making existing and new courses more flexible and accessible in a wide range of educational settings

including, on-campus, off-campus, across campuses, in the workplace and at home, nationally as well as internationally to a diverse student population at various levels, ranging form certificate to advanced diploma courses, from graduate certificates to professional and para-professional courses in TAFE.

Within a context of making courses 'more' flexible some preliminary questions which need to be addressed are:

- for whom are courses more accessible?
- by comparison with which other courses are they more flexible?
- in what ways have courses recently changed to warrant the use of new terminology?

These questions suggest that traditional educational delivery in TAFE is inflexible and that traditional TAFE education and training courses are not readily accessible to disadvantaged groups. It may be argued that traditional approaches to teaching and learning in TAFE colleges have largely remained unchanged over many years. Any such rigidity would be inappropriate within the epoch of changing social conditions in which TAFE colleges and institutes find themselves (NBEET 1992). Such arguments, however, are based on a myth that TAFE institutions and TAFE teachers are unchanging using only lectures, tutorials, workshops and seminars. In reality many TAFE colleges and TAFE teachers have for many years used alternative methods. Perhaps the more appropriate questions should be:

- How are efforts to make teaching and learning more flexible affecting, changing and expressing existing educational and training values? and
- What advantages are accruing for different groups of students, teachers, employers and others affected by the work of the TAFE system?

These questions cannot be answered categorically. Effective delivery processes may vary from course to course, competency area to competency area and student to student, and so will the characteristics of what 'flexibility' means. Teaching and learning can be said to be more flexible when they:

- Provide for a wider and more diversified group of learners
- Allow for a wider range of learning interests, needs and styles
- Increase student access allowing choice of time and location for learning.

It follows that there is a variety of mixes of teaching, organisational and curriculum strategies which give expression to the idea and ideal of 'flexibility'.

Flexible delivery has become a watchword in many Australian TAFE institutions, an integrating theme increasing learning for a larger and more

diverse student groups. The idea itself is as hard to attack as motherhood, but in all these TAFE institutions 'flexible learning' and 'flexible delivery' actually means different things, and exerts quite different effects. However, at least as far as aspiration goes, there are also some commonalities. In summary it is argued that 'flexible delivery' provides opportunities for students to:

- Overcome barriers of distance, location and circumstances;
- Undertake innovative and high quality courses despite their own educational background, work situation, family conditions, ability and social and cultural status and other impediments to educational participation.

Flexible delivery is argued to sponsor *innovation*: engaging students in more active learning through a variety and mix of approaches and use of appropriate media texts and technologies. It may also sponsor *integration* and interdisciplinary studies, bringing discipline areas together through problem based learning in the work place, at home and within the TAFE institution. It has also been argued to sponsor *equity and educational social justice* enhancing learning opportunities for those groups which have been traditionally disadvantaged and/or marginalised—women, students with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, immigrants (new and of longstanding) and the economically disadvantaged.

Related virtues espoused include the concepts of (i) *life-long learning*, (ii) development of *generic skills and competencies*, (iii) continuous development of *occupational and work-related knowledge and skills;* and (iv) the possibility of *international recognition* of the attainment of competencies and standards which transcend the cultural diversity of students and teaching staff (following the lead for example of ISO 9000-9004).

Flexible learning: Some misconceptions

Especially at first acquaintance, flexible delivery is seen simplistically as a way of delivering conventional course content to students more efficiently and effectively. This view typically values the role of technology in the provision of a supply of learning materials, and often invokes the assumption that technological innovation makes learning packages 'teacher proof'. Taken to its extreme, this assumption becomes the belief that the technology, when perfected, will replace teaching and teachers. That technologies are not perfectible is amply illustrated by Challenger and Chernobyl, but unfortunately some of the wild-eyed optimism about the prospects for flexible delivery must still be contested.

Romantic views of the obsolescence of human interaction are a distraction from more important issues. Accordingly, we pose a number of cautionary and focusing questions based on our experiences of distance education and our readings of the more sensible literatures of flexible delivery are appropriate.

These are questions which are fundamentally empirical, that is, they can only be answered through critically examined experience. In other words, the questions posed can only be answered through research into practice and the critical analysis of the values which inform it. Our own tentative suggestions as answers to these questions are provided on the basis of our own experience and engagement with the literature. We invite further study and debate ...

(i) *Does the provision of resources which are accessible to students constitute meaningful 'teaching'?*

Unless there are appropriate learning activities, assessment strategies and procedures, support services and interaction opportunities put in place learners will do little with such materials and they will learn less than they would do when they passively listen to lectures and put the lecture notes unread into their folders. In other words, there is a difference between being learner-centred and learner-centric, the latter denies the importance of engagement between materials, teachers and learners.

(ii) *Will flexible delivery will do away with expensive and difficult processes of human interaction?*

It is true that some students do not need much interaction and may learn successfully without contact with others. However, here is little evidence that *optimal* understanding is achieved under these conditions. Further, there is always a majority of others who both need and prefer contact and interaction—these include students who lack self confidence, motivation or self discipline and such needs and preferences are very common. But there is substance to this observation which transcends students' own perceptions of their needs and preferences. Interaction is important for reasons of understanding course content, motivation, resolving problems and pacing.

(iii) *Will flexible learning and delivery will contribute to the efficiency of the tertiary education?*

There is no compelling argument or evidence that flexible delivery will be more economical. Quality materials and technologies are expensive to produce, and economies of scale are offset by the need for standardisation. Standardisation in turn generates the need for support for students to interpret the curriculum in the context of their own experience. That is, the success or otherwise of flexible delivery will depend on the implementation and support structures made available to students. Neither the technologies or support structures are inexpensive.

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(iv) *Is the conversion of existing courses to 'flexible delivery mode' a straightforward technical task of 'translation'?*

No. Existing ways of teaching are heavily influenced by existing technologies of teaching, talk, teacher control, talk. architecture of rooms ... The technology is itself a hidden curriculum of both constraint and possibility for teaching and for relationships among teachers and students. Further, considerable intellectual energy and resource deployment is required so appropriate infrastructures can be developed and implemented. There is a need for management to make provision for the development time and effort required from teaching and other support staff.

(v) *Will there be quick and sustained educational (and other) payoffs from flexible delivery?*

In most cases, several years of development of materials, resources and staff is necessary before quality education is accomplished. It may take time before the substantial expenditures required will show benefits. Finding even modest 'up-front' financial resources is not easy in most institutions, making these kinds of development a priority over other initiatives is relatively rare. Long term benefits are at best uncertain as renewal of programs does not generate the enthusiasm and energy that initial experimentation with modes of delivery. Keeping materials up-to-date requires considerable effort, even when the technologies ostensibly make this relatively easy.

(vi) *Are 'productivity gains' identifiable and demonstrable?*

Within the educational, political and management arenas of educational institutions there is a persistent belief that the quality of student learning is a more or less direct function of face-to-face teaching contact time exists. All sorts of strategies are invented to create face-to-face teaching opportunities. This blurs the nature of 'inputs' and leads to misconceptions about causes of any observed productivity gains. Flexible delivery allows for a mix of delivery modes, a mix of input factors and thus a mix of productivity gains. Gauging 'productivity' in educational terms (rather than in terms of efficiencies of inputs) is a profoundly difficult task.

(vii) *Can flexible delivery infrastructure easily be put in place?*

No. The opposite is the case. It is easy to ignore the sophistication and extent of the needs of students (and teachers) for infrastructure which is sensitive to a new range of educational relationships.. Successful flexible delivery systems require specialised additional support for teachers and students. A commitment to flexibility must be explicit in all services and support. These include:

- Establishing enrolment procedures which allow students to enrol or re-enrol by different means such as through phone, by mail or mail.
- Providing off-campus library support.
- Establishing and maintaining infrastructures for production and delivery of learning materials.
- Establishing and maintaining systems for the receipt, dissemination and returns of assignments and other student work.
- Providing suitable flexible delivery methods and training about their use through use of appropriate technology which may include tele-conferencing, video-conferencing, computer mediated technology, etc.
- Provide continuing opportunities for teachers (and students) to familiarise themselves with new delivery techniques and technologies which are likely to evolve quickly.

Misconceptions about flexible delivery are barriers to student success. To overcome the potential barriers it may be advantageous to recognise that 'flexible delivery' is a relative concept. Institutions, departments, groups of teachers within and across institutions, and individual teachers may invent and implement variations and combinations of flexible delivery differently in different areas and courses. Invariably, different uses and interpretations of flexible delivery change those who use it.

What does 'flexible delivery" mean?

Flexible teaching, delivery and learning can mean different things to different people within and outside education and training system. This variance is not necessarily a bad thing. In Victoria, for example, it reflects a diversity of practice and thinking in TAFE, industry, commerce and other training providers. It allows TAFE teachers and TAFE institutions to produce and utilise learning resources for both teaching and in consultancies to industry and commerce. However, the ambiguity of meaning sometimes hides the non-educational rationale for the advocacies of flexible delivery. Flexible delivery was not a solution to a problem educators were clamouring to have solved. It emerged first and foremost as a management solution, a solution of the problems of student shortages, and of suppose inefficiencies in conventional teaching.

Generally speaking, advocacy for flexible delivery can be seen as a response to TAFE resource allocation issues by the Federal and State Governments. Within many TAFE institutions flexible delivery is driven by the pressure to use technology in order to achieve a more effective and efficient delivery of courses (Trinkler 1994). More defensible and sophisticated arguments can be made for flexible delivery from the curriculum-teaching-learning-assessment nexus. That

is, changes in 'delivery' must be considered in relation to TAFE teaching and student assessment practices (Nunan 1996). Bringing the two arguments together, namely the politics of resourcing and teaching-learning-assessment issues Fleming (1993) defined flexible learning in the following terms:

> Flexible learning is taken to mean the organisation and resourcing of learning in ways that shift the emphasis off the traditional format of lecture and supporting seminar, with its tendency to reinforce a one-way conception of teaching and learning as the dissemination of wisdom from teacher to learner. Flexible learning offers the learner a more actively constructive role by providing a framework in which learning goals can me more independently pursued. That's the theory. In practice success depends on getting the framework right; otherwise, flexible and independent learning degenerates into 'go away and get on with it' (Fleming 1993, p. 319).

For both educational and pragmatic reasons flexible delivery (now including the traditional and once fashionable rubrics of 'off-campus study', 'distance education' and 'open learning') is one of the fastest expanding areas within higher education today. It encompasses a variety of forms of educational practice from those traditionally concerned with 'off-campus study' through 'open learning' to more recent forms such as 'distributed training'. The development of course materials, teaching and communication systems, educational and training system administration and management, and research are fundamental parts of flexible delivery.

There are several reasons for this phenomenon, some are merely economic considerations. More recently social and educational imperatives have emerged. There has been considerable political sponsorship of the TAFE sector. From an economic point of view, it is argued that TAFE colleges will play a major role in training and retraining for the globalised economy nationally and internationally. The TAFE sector in Australia has witnessed an invigorated political sponsorship which states that TAFE colleges should adopt private sector methods in order to be more effective and efficient in providing both specialised and mass education and training to a wide variety of traditional and non-traditional student and other groups. The notion that TAFE colleges have a distinctive public sector role which might also be vital to the community has receded in this privatisation rhetoric. The emergent belief is that in order to survive and flourish TAFE colleges will need to become the main 'producers' and 'distributors' of value-added teaching and training through innovative and self funding strategies. The educational effect of this ideology is just now becoming apparent, as we shall show in Chapter 2.

Some TAFE colleges and institutes have been slow to implement new learning and teaching strategies. This is perhaps understandable given difficulties associated with raising the capital to create new infrastructure. However, it is potentially disastrous. In general, TAFE colleges have a much richer and universally-useable knowledge and skill formation base than existing and incipient institutions of private enterprise. When changes are embraced in a TAFE institution, there are significant built-in practical, cultural and material advantages, for example, for attracting external funding for teaching and learning resources. Though TAFE may have a patchy record in access and equity practices, TAFE colleges *are* responding to issues of access and equity in curriculum, organisation, and teaching to work with previously uninvolved groups. This has often meant providing educational and training experiences for students which go beyond the rigidity of traditional education and training approaches such as face-to-face lectures, workshops and tutorials. 'Opening' education and training to larger numbers of students and to disadvantaged groups with a view to enhanced participation are things TAFE colleges will remain best equipped to do. The TAFE colleges of tomorrow may not look much like 'techs' of yesterday, but they will still be there, and they can and should implement a lot more of the training agenda than politicians and privateers would have us believe.

Shifts in and issues facing higher education

Since the 1970s there has been an unprecedented growth of tertiary places in most OECD countries. As student numbers have increased the funding available for each student has declined in real terms. This stimulated rethinking about traditional teaching-learning strategies and support structures and placed emphasis on access and equity issues. Access and equity was not merely a policy aspiration, but was thrust upon institutions. The traditional assumption that students should attend lectures and workshops became more unworkable as student populations became more diverse. In the TAFE sector in particular, students came from more diverse backgrounds and with more diverse educational experiences and knowledge, qualifications, cultural and social settings, maturity and interests. Students did not learn in the same ways or at the same pace. This forced interest in divergent modes of delivery and the use of a number of different technologies, especially those which allowed learning at a different pace. At the same time, courses and content in many disciplines have become more complex, and yet the contact hours have generally declined. Advocacies for workplace based learning grew too. This brought about a general recognition that TAFE colleges should:

- provide greater access to learning and learning resources;
- increase students' independence from time and place of learning;

- increase flexibility through different option sequences in learning material;
- plan 'delivery' of learning materials more carefully;
- develop consistent approaches to 'content' across all parallel classes and tutorials;
- step up quality control;
- focus on student learning rather than teaching;

In order to attract students and to remain competitive nationally and internationally, these were tasks which the TAFE had to address. Additional pressures on this educational reform agenda came from the decline (or at best modest growth) in government funding. Institutions approached the development of flexible delivery in an increasingly commercial and competitive environment. Difficult educational questions were to be confronted in an ideologically unstable and financially spare environment.

A rationale for flexible delivery

One of the pivotal questions facing TAFE institutions today is: Why should flexible delivery replace traditional educational and training processes? After all, a change from traditional to flexible delivery requires a great expenditure of intellectual energy, commitment, resources and work. For many TAFE teachers it seemed difficult to imagine that traditional teaching can successfully be enhanced by flexible learning. There was resistance to what was perceived as the technologisation of teaching. Professional identity invoked a devout commitment to personal relationships with students. Students themselves were thought to prefer personal interaction with teachers, though generations of studies of classrooms (see for example Lundgren 1972, 1981) indicate that only the so-called 'steering group' receive adequate attention.

For many TAFE teachers, the turn to flexible delivery was a pragmatic response to the issues facing their institution in an economic rationalist environment. For others, flexible delivery was important because of its aspirations (i) to enhance access to education and training, (ii) to provide richer learning resources for students, (iii) to increase TAFE engagement with industry, (iv) to illustrate use of the new information and media technologies, and (v) to provide learners with more opportunities for control over their learning, education and training.

The developing rationales for flexible delivery were myriad, and ranged from demands placed on TAFE institutions from the external environment, through new aspirations among teachers, to changes caused internally by demands made of teachers by the new and less tractable student population.

The external environment for TAFE

The dimensions of influence on TAFE colleges from 'outside' include:

(i) *Competition.* There is increasing competition between TAFE colleges at the national level and for full fee paying students internationally. However, current Government policies in Australia indicate that further competition for Australian full fee paying is in the making. This means that colleges will be required to cater more flexibly for even more diverse student needs and expectations.

(ii) *Collaboration*. It is recognised that not all TAFE colleges and institutes will be able to provide all learning materials to all students in a flexible mode, nor will there be the necessary expertise available at all times within every TAFE institution there will be a need for collaboration between TAFE colleges nationally and internationally. Argument has it that flexible learning material and other resource based learning provides a reasonably effortless basis for collaboration.

(iii) *Employer demands*. Many employers and employer groups are seeking courses at various award level for their employees. They want employees to undertake sets of subjects/units/ modules which would directly benefit the company or the government department and which lead to tertiary level awards. Educational materials usually sought by clients is applied to and focussed on particular situations rather than general tertiary education outcomes. That is, clients usually look for courses which are not bound by detailed course rules as far as the structure, sequence and content is concerned.

(iv) *Funding*. Government funding for the tertiary sector is decreasing. There is increased pressure on TAFE colleges to find alternative income through full-fee paying courses and consultancies.

(v) *Distance and diversity*. There is increased expectation that TAFE colleges will provide education and training to a larger number of students including expanded target groups of part-time and distant learners. It is believed that flexible delivery pathways and modules can promote and make a better use of face-to-face time with all learners including opening up access to part-time and distant learners.

(vi) *System changes*. The TAFE sector is expected to upgrade standards, impact on the economy, collaborate with industry and universities, and be more directly responsive to commercial and industrial imperatives.

(vii) *Teaching conditions*. Policy changes have reduced security of tenure for teachers, weakened requirements for teacher training, and moved the focus to 'enterprise bargaining' about terms and conditions. Each of these will have quite different effects in different colleges, depending for

example on how wealthy and how popular a college is, and on how well-connected it is to industries with the resources, need and commitment to training.

The internal environment

Within the internal environment, influences which needed to be addressed include:

(i) *Diversified student population.* There has been a marked increase of mature and non-traditional-entry students across the tertiary sector. At the same time there is a growing demand from persons already in the work place to upgrade and/or update their qualifications. There is also a strong demand from industry and employer groups for staff and human resource development in collaboration with TAFE colleges. All these factors point to the need to extend traditional learning and teaching approaches by providing additional flexible pathways and in many instances to substitute totally or in part some traditional approaches often disliked by mature students (such as mass lectures and attendances) with flexibility including workplace education, distance learning and other forms of open and flexible learning.

(ii) *Varied students expectations*. Both traditional school leavers and mature age students in occupations and workforce are increasingly seeking to learn with support of self-study material. Across the board students' expectations are changing by turning away from being taught mostly in lectures or direct face-to-face education and training sessions. Students from all ways of life now expect a greater diversity of learning opportunities through flexibility. Thus flexible learning supports learners in their study allowing them to achieve their goals in a variety of settings using diversified resources.

(iii) *Over expansion of courses*. Many TAFE courses are over-taught, leading to surface rather than deep learning. Many learners, especially those seeking to upgrade and/or update their qualifications and seeking additional knowledge rather than qualifications require highly valued transferable knowledge. Flexible learning based on good educational quality resources, learning materials and technology, provides learners in many instances with a more valuable learning experiences, allowing them to make optimum use of time in the TAFE institution and outside. It provides also a greater motivation to benefit from collaborative approaches to learning, as all students have access to the same material, irrespective of tutorials and lectures.

(iv) *Staff morale.* The intensification of work in the TAFE sector has adversely affected staff morale. This is affected by formal changes in industrial

conditions, but is compounded by other demands on teachers, and an increasingly hostile rhetoric about the education profession(s) from governments.

The intersection of influences creates an environment where flexible learning is valued, but where its implementation is likely to be a struggle.

Flexible delivery, teachers and teaching

Teachers are at the nexus of competing interests and demands, and the development of flexible delivery materials may be seen as yet another of imposition of work. However, there are some advantages apparent for TAFE teachers in adopting flexible teaching. Once in place, flexible learning, teaching and delivery diminish place and time constraints not only for students but also for teaching staff. This applies especially to technology mediated approaches, but apply also to more modest print-based resource approaches to teaching and learning. Teaching staff can use well developed and high quality flexible learning materials in different situations, for different contexts and different student groups. Flexible delivery can lead to:

- *Reduction in repetitive work load*. Quality flexible learning material can be used by a larger number of students. Thus there is less need for repetitive teaching activities usually found in face-to-face lecture, workshop and tutorial situations. As students using flexible learning methods have the tendency to take (with appropriate support) responsibilities for their own learning, they potentially free the teachers' time for other activities such as preparation of new materials and consultancies. More particularly, the removal of the drudgery of 'delivery' allows teaching time to be more diagnostically focused on student needs arising from engagement with the materials.
- *Flexibility in working conditions*. The individual teacher can decide with less constraint when, where and how to teach. This means that individual staff members are in charge of their own time, teaching methods, and quality of content. The flexibility in working conditions provides, for example, the opportunity to attend conferences, workshops and other off-campus activities at times when the traditional teaching modes would not allow absenteeism.
- *Use of other resources*. The use of team teaching methods is made possible through the use of appropriate media and technology, without having to have the resources at a specific time at a specific place. For example a guest tutor or instructor or a team member can teach asynchronously from any place and any time. The resource can be made available to students at a later time at their choice of place. Resource

based learning (where appropriate) can replace lectures, tutorials and seminars.

- *Control*. The individual teacher is in control of change, having the opportunity to choose how when and what to be through, and which media, text and technology to be used.
- *Professional development*: The opportunity for teachers to work together on unit development creates professional development as a matter of course. Teachers learn from each other as the concrete issues of development are engaged. Further, other expert advice can be sought somewhat economically for the group of teachers (and indeed other professionals such as instructional designers) participating.

Flexible delivery has potential to increase the quality of teaching and learning. In order to gain advantages through flexible delivery it is necessary to consider simultaneously teaching and learning options, student learning support approaches and strategies, alternative course structures and content, appropriate patterns of interaction between teachers and students, among teachers, and most importantly among students. Institutional infrastructure must be developed to give expression to these educational aspirations. Only when all these factors have been considered can the educational advantages of flexible delivery for students, teachers and the TAFE institution be realised as enhanced quality in the learning and teaching experience.

Inventing and implementing flexible delivery

The invention and implementation of flexible delivery depends very much on the formulation of ideals, policies and practices which may either arise from existing teaching and learning methods or from those which challenge them. The strategies for achieving flexible delivery must address misconceptions and barriers which may exist. Flexible learning approaches often confront the TAFE institution and its teaching and other support staff who have quite different expectations that students should 'get on with their work' in the traditional way.

The literature dealing with implementation is as diversified as the meanings of the concept of flexible delivery itself. One example, Fleming (1993) discusses the phases of an incremental approach for implementation of flexible learning. For simplicity the phases are classified here as (i) Spontaneous Development, (ii) Cooperative Action, and (iii) Consolidated Cooperative Action.

(i) Spontaneous Development

A typical example of this form of development of flexible learning is to support face-to-face teaching methods by providing learning materials which the students can use semi-independently. Such material consists

very often of lecture follow-up notes, annotated reading lists, worksheets, guidelines for further readings, audio and video tapes which give the students access to content and learning approaches for a module, a section or a part of a unit.

(ii) Cooperative Action

In comparison to the spontaneous development phase, the Cooperative Action phase is more complex. It requires cooperative action from teachers by forming course and/or unit teams. The team decides on the structures and the content, maps the pathways for learning and develops teaching and learning strategies, decides on technologies which will support learning, and bring about the convergence of all the necessary pedagogical, technical and administrative implementation, and delivery requirements. The convergence defines the objectives of the course through provision of larger components of learning materials in order to replace traditional delivery. In flexible delivery it is important to ensure that key conceptual elements of learning materials are designed and developed so that they can be used independently and in a variety of appropriate situations.

(iii) Consolidated Cooperative Action

This phase serves as consolidation of the cooperative action phase by providing teaching *and* administrative infrastructure which provides for and requires review and re-development of learning materials so that improvement can take place in pedagogical sense and through use of a variety of technologies, media and textual form. This is the phase where interactive multimedia, print material, and advanced forms of media, texts and technologies are constantly being developed and implemented.

The full culmination of these phases requires extensive facilitation of collaborative arrangements among the teachers, managers and other professional and support services. In the first instance, the TAFE institution through course coordinators, heads of school and departments and managers need to encourage teachers to establish 'inception points'. This encouragement includes funds for development and recognition for the teachers. Recognition includes time allowances for development activities, accepting that development of flexible learning material is equivalent to teaching, and formal acknowledgment that achievements in flexible delivery practice and development are appropriate for promotion purposes.

Course coordinators, and heads of school and department must create structures which will allow individual teachers to approach their task of developing flexible learning material from a variety of 'inception points' which are available from within the department, school or the TAFE institution. This

includes support from a variety of educational services such as educational development and desktop publishing services, interactive multi media and information technology units, and library. In essence these support structures and services are needed to provide reference points and a database which disseminates the information obtained to others. Course coordinators and others need to exercise leadership so that the unit teams can develop a structure and convergence of elements of delivery for the course and its units or modules.

An outline for general inception points

The inception points presented here are general in nature. In many instances these will need to be adapted to particular situations and some may not be applicable, whilst others more situation specific need to be added. The purpose of the general inception points which follow is to help the departments, schools and teaching staff to analyse the process of change from existing forms of delivery to a flexible delivery mode, starting with program/course and module design, followed by teaching methods and concluding with learning support issues. Some of general points for consideration are:

(i) Program/course and module design will typically address advantages of simplifying course structures in order to provide modularisation option, avoiding duplication of subject aims and objectives collapsing them into fewer number of subjects. This would include considerations of economies of scale, articulation and RPL.

(ii) Teaching methods will typically focus on alternative modes of delivery and learning where possible. This can be supported by changing group sizes, alternative utilisation of and access to new and/or existing resources such as distance education and other types of learning materials.

(iii) Learning support issues focusing on availability of support learning materials and appropriate technologies, interaction with teaching staff and other students, information retrieval help, on-line access to information, tele-conferencing facilities and other technology mediated communication.

The above outlines for general inception points will need to be developed specifically for individual situations. This is usually best achieved through unit team discussions allowing to 'map' specific units with view of pedagogical theory and practice. In short, there is no one all embracing approach.

Conclusion

Flexible delivery and learning may not be an answer for all situations. Its effectiveness and success will depend on the resolution of a number of issues. One of the most important ones is the balance between individual teachers'

autonomy, preferences and new knowledge acquired in unit development and the compromises inherent in collaborative work, albeit work which results in an enriched curriculum.

There are other points which need to be considered in a discussion at various levels within the TAFE institution its schools and departments. For example, there is a need to consider (i) the nature of materials and technologies to be used, (ii) learners' background and abilities and (iii) teachers' abilities to implement the pedagogy of flexible delivery methods. With reference to technologies it may be important to consider that in addition to face-to-face delivery, flexible delivery uses traditional distance education and open learning methodologies as well as technology based delivery. The important point is that it is necessary to be mindful of advantages and disadvantages of each of the technologies in different settings for different courses and students. Technology is a vehicle for transmitting information. It may facilitate new kinds of interaction among various groups. More important than each of these is its capacity to inspire new and more educative cultural forms.

There are arguments for and against flexible delivery. In favour of flexible delivery is the argument of codification of teaching by opening up new perspectives on pedagogy, education and training, and the potential quality of generic material enabling the teacher to focus on students' learning rather than teaching. The main arguments against flexible learning are that the use of generic material diminishes the potential for the autonomy of a TAFE teacher. Disagreements between students and teachers about the relevance of content and forms of assessment for example are resolved in traditional settings by the teacher autonomously changing what is happening in the classroom, in response to student demands and needs. Some see the technologies of flexible learning diminishing that professional responsiveness. Others argue that flexible delivery *can* be designed to accommodate these concerns. There are of course other arguments which can be put for either case. On balance, however a strong argument can be made in favour of flexible learning and delivery as long as it is understood that there is a need to respect teacher-directed as well as learner-directed activities and approaches.

We have suggested here that discussion among internal and external stake holders about flexible delivery revolves around two questions: (i) What advantages are accruing for different groups of students, teachers, employers and others affected by the work of TAFE systems? (ii) How are efforts to make teaching and learning more flexible affecting, changing and expressing existing educational and training values? These questions lead on to issues about the provision of resources such as staffing, interaction such as student support and teaching and delivery, efficiency given policy, practices and issues, material development including material production, and profitability under the conditions of funding and resource allocations including productivity gains, and

implementation of flexible delivery including accreditation. In the next Chapter we take up empirically issues to do with *staffing, teaching and delivery, student support, policy, funding and resource allocation, course/module production*, and *accreditation and credentialling*. We derived these categories from an explicit analysis of the literature.

Our intention to this point has been to sketch some background to the emergence of advocacies for flexible delivery in the Australian context. We now turn our intention to the study of a 'case'. The case is that of off-campus study provision in several Victorian TAFE colleges. It was our aim:

(i) to identify issues arising out of some substantial changes in the way in which off-campus study in the colleges was organised and to identify some key issues arising from those changes;

(ii) to generate some conceptual models of off-campus provision in the context of the changing ideological climate within TAFE colleges with respect flexible delivery and college autonomy and entrepreneurialism;

(iii) to make a preliminary foray into the debates about commercialisation in the education sector and to relate this to the globalisation debate.

After we engage some of the concrete expressions of flexible delivery practice in Chapter 2, we pursue the more theoretical debates in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 2

College Based Off-Campus Delivery Models: A Case Study

Introduction

The TAFE sector in Australia is, as the name implies, responsible for the vast bulk of vocational and technical training in Australia. The sector also conducts 'further education', a variety of programs which provide a bridge to higher education and to employment for early school leavers. Many of these programs have also provided vital 'access' to education for a variety of disengaged, disenfranchised and disadvantaged groups. In regional towns in particular, TAFE colleges have also provided a strong community service and focus. Both technical and further education roles are enhanced by a substantial array of 'off-campus' or 'distance education' courses. The study we were commissioned to conduct by Open Training Services focused on these courses. Open Training Services is itself an agency within the Victorian TAFE sector to coordinate the provision of off-campus teaching and course development now that these responsibilities have been devolved to individual colleges who are expected to 'compete' with each other for students. Off-campus course development and teaching was previously centralised in the TAFE Off-Campus Co-ordinating Authority (TOCCA) and OTS assumed a somewhat reduced role in the devolved and competitive environment. The nature and impact of this environment is the focus of this Chapter, and some preliminary theoretical interpretation is the subject of Chapter 3.

This multi-site case study was sponsored by Open Training Services (OTS). It was commissioned in response to a proposal submitted to OTS by the authors through the Deakin Centre for Education and Change. The study documents a range of existing strategies adopted by TAFE Colleges in Victoria for the 'delivery' of off-campus programs. The sites studied were six TAFE Colleges nominated by the staff of OTS to ensure diversity among the colleges studied. According to OTS, the criteria used to inform the selection were the need to include:

- urban regional and rural colleges;
- large, medium and small colleges;
- colleges employing a range of different management structures for off-campus operations including; (i) delivery through a dedicated Off-Campus Centre (centralised), (ii) delivery by individual teaching departments with

academic responsibility for particular courses/modules (devolved or mainstream), and (iii) a midpoint between these extremes;

- a wide range of student support mechanisms, including tutor support via telephone or fax, email, bulletin boards, some face-to-face delivery in various configurations and student newsletters.

Our goal was to draw upon and respect the understandings of those people who had most direct experience in developing and implementing off-campus courses and in teaching the students who use this mode of study. The study engages a broad range of pedagogical[1], curriculum and organisational issues and should assist the development of preferred models of off-campus delivery arrangements for the future.

Though the definition of terms in this field is contested terrain (see Chapter 3), the definition of 'off-campus study' we used to focus the study, was effectively specified for us. With one exception, the colleges we were expected to study had officially designated 'off-campus co-ordinators' and their responsibilities effectively defined the boundaries of the 'cases' we studied. A rather broad conceptual space was needed to explore the literature. To do that, we took TAFE off-campus delivery to be defined as 'a flexible and open learning concept supported by new technologies or traditional distance education print and audio-visual media provision, with the goal of making learning relatively independent of time and completely independent of location'.

The form of the case study

The general aim of the study was to present the findings in three key forms: (i) a series of 'self-descriptions' of each participating college, cued by a survey prepared by the researchers; (ii) four 'models' of off-campus delivery derived from the data; and (iii) a series of issues arising from the study. To accomplish this, we employed an adaptation of the naturalistic case study approach.

Research methodology

The methodology employed derives from the tradition of 'illuminative' (Parlett & Hamilton 1976), 'responsive' (Stake 1975) and 'naturalistic', 'case study' evaluation (Stake 1978, 1995), aspiring to express findings in terms readily accessible to anticipated audiences and stakeholders. We present quite detailed accounts of individual colleges so that readers can see some of the data from which our interpretations are derived. This should help readers to make

[1] We are aware that some people prefer the term 'andragogy', but use the term 'pedagogy' because of its European intellectual history which explicitly links teaching, curriculum, educational enquiry and the organisational milieu in which each practice is constructed.

'naturalistic generalisations' (Stake 1978, 1995, Stake & Trumble 1977), extrapolations of relevance to the reader's own context from the cases presented. Some readers may not wish to read each case in detail, but may move directly to the 'models' and 'issues' identified later in the Chapter.

Some of our informants urged us to make 'recommendations' which they saw as a way of ameliorating some of the concerns they identified. There is nothing new about such advocacies, but we do not accept such a role. One of the *burdens* of evaluation discourse is the pressure to make recommendations. We have avoided them for several reasons:

(i) Recommendations strengthen the judgmental hand of the evaluator.

(ii) Recommendations ignore the obvious fact that decisions are informed (and constrained and enabled) by much more than an evaluation can comprehend and present.

(iii) Recommendations attribute a right to evaluators which they do not have (unless one assumes that recommendations are there simply to be debated).

(iv) Recommendations invite decision-makers to opt out of their responsibilities by transferring their agency to the evaluation team (who have long since departed).

Our view of evaluation is the broad one proposed by Kemmis:

> Evaluation is the process of marshalling information and arguments which enable interested individuals and groups to participate in the critical debate about a specific program (Kemmis 1982, p. 222).

The researchers interviewed key participants, observed program activities, and analysed documents associated with programs with a view to identifying key program features which differentiate approaches in terms of aspirations and values of stakeholders, pedagogy and curriculum in action, and outcomes for students. Because of the condensed nature of the study, the researchers spent most time with Off-Campus Coordinators or their equivalents. Their work on behalf of the project was guided by a lightly structured survey document (see below) which sought to elicit information from them, but also to guide their questioning of participants on behalf of the project. The Off-Campus Coordinators were informants, participant observers, and interviewers for the study.

The report was validated by the conventional approach known as participant confirmation: the draft final report was circulated to those involved and affected for both release and validation. Some Off-Campus Coordinators (or their

equivalents) took this responsibility themselves, others had several people in their institutions work on the draft document. The criteria for validation and release were fairness, relevance and accuracy. Where participants took the view that these criteria were not met in the draft version, they were obliged to suggest amendments to ensure that these criteria are met, and the report validated by these means was then released. The text of the letter sent to colleges seeking correction and validation of the report read as follows:

> We would be grateful if you would read the document through, but in particular pay attention to the 'Cued self-description' which applies to your College. You will recall that this description was constructed using your responses to the survey, together with other data presented at interview by yourself and other informants, and in other documentation.
>
> We are depending on you to ensure that the report meets the criteria of *fairness, relevance and accuracy*. You may feel it would be helpful to consult with your own group of informants. Of course, you will be most able to comment on your own institution's description, but any other comments you make would be appreciated. If you think that the criteria of *fairness, relevance and accuracy* are not met with respect to your College in the context of the report, we would be grateful if you would make specific changes to wording which would remedy the problem. Once you return the document, your comments will be taken into account, and the amended document will be regarded as endorsed for public release as *fair, relevant and accurate*. Even if you are comfortable with the report, we would be grateful for a response, but in the event that none is forthcoming, we will assume that you accept that the parts of the document as they are contextualised and pertaining to your College meet the criteria.

Five colleges responded, some with quite detailed and helpful suggestions. One college did not respond, but in subsequent telephone contact by us the spokesperson indicated that the report was fair, relevant and accurate as it was presented in the first draft.

The report validated by these means was then released. The actual findings, that is, the 'models' of course delivery and issues, are presented here for discussion in the form in which they were validated by participants in the full report. A further round of validation was conducted less formally in a presentation of the key findings to a meeting of most Off-campus Co-ordinators in the state. There was general affirmation of the issues identified in particular colleges. One participant in the meeting (but not in the evaluation study)

acknowledged the issues, but claimed that they were all happily resolved within the college he represented. This was not a view endorsed at that time by any other participants in the meeting.

Survey and data collection

College Directors and Off-Campus Coordinators were approached first by OTS, the project sponsors, to arrange participation. Directors were then approached by the researchers to ensure that the College response could and would be made through the Off-Campus Coordinators. Directors were informed that the Off-Campus Coordinator would be the key informant and collector of information for the study in preparation for a visit by one of the team who would then discuss and confirm observations with the Coordinator. That is, there was just one survey document completed by each participating college. The Off-Campus Coordinator was primarily responsible for documenting views of people. Where there was consensus, divergence, or any range of views whatever, we depended in the first instance on the documentation provided by the Coordinator. In colleges where there was no formally designated 'Off-Campus Coordinator' or staff member in a similar role, directors were asked to identify an appropriate contact person in the college.

Establishing a survey 'instrument'

Using the relevant literature (both public and from the OTS archives) and some early interview data (especially from staff from OTS and a nearby TAFE college), we constructed a rather open survey instrument to guide data collection and to provide focus for follow-up interviews with key informants. Whilst a survey is not typically a useful device in the conduct of naturalistic case studies, in this study the requirement to do quite condensed fieldwork was imposed by a relatively sparse project budget. The survey was primarily intended as an interviewing and data collection guide for key site informants who also acted as erstwhile 'research assistants' to the evaluation study.

We anticipated that many issues raised by these sources, the national and international literature and state and local informants, would emerge as relevant in one form or another in the study. Informed by this perspective, we developed a theoretical framework within which the detail of college *practices and issues* could emerge, organised according to the *sites and venues* of relevant off-campus delivery activity with each college. As it turned out, there were seven categories of 'practices and issues' and seven categories of 'sites and venues' of activity. The substantive justification for the survey matrix we used is documented in detail in the evaluation study. Here we present the practices and issues and sites and venues with the bibliographic references we used to help justify their inclusion:

A framework of practices and issues

We identified—although acknowledging the problems of significant overlap—the following issues and practices to guide our information gathering through our respondents and collaborators in individual colleges:

- Staffing (Woodburne 1992, Woodburne 1993, Hopkins & Robinson 1993, Drummond 1993)
- Teaching and delivery (Eggers 1990, Hopkins & Robinson 1993, Burge 1991, Student Services Australia 1993, Doring 1994)
- Student support (Hopkins & Robinson 1993, Burge 1991, Student Services Australia 1993, Doring 1994)
- Policy development (Goode 1993, Lundberg 1994, Hawk 1993)
- Funding and resource allocation (Goode 1993,Cope & Sherr 1991, Guri-Rozenblit 1993)
- Course production and development Dhanarajan & Timmers 1992)
- Accreditation and credentialling (Fennell 1991).

Two areas not yet mentioned emerged from the literature review, but were not dealt with in the study because we did not have the resources to engage them in sufficient detail. These concerned (i) financial management issues in TAFE (Turcato 1993) including the relationship between external provision of funding and internal resource allocation with respect to off-campus funding in particular; and (ii) exhortations for the sponsorship of critically self-reflective research culture in the sector.

A framework of sites and venues of activity

For each of these areas of issues and practices, the sites and venues where issues might find expression can be identified. These were:

- College student support and administrative services (Wolfram 1994, Student Services Australia 1993).
- Open learning/off-campus services and co-ordination (Latchem & Pritchard 1994) including library services (Hammer 1994).
- Course production and development (Bruhn & Guthrie 1991).
- School/department (Chapman & Smallwood 1992, Mountney & Navaratnam 1991).
- Institutional and cross-college arrangements (Schneider 1993, Anderson 1992), TAFE 'system' (Stevenson & Brown 1994).
- Teachers (Wolcott 1995) modes of instruction and use of technologies (McConnell 1994, Shelley 1992).

Within the above set of 'sites and venues of activity' we used the literature to identify some major themes such as links between TAFE and industry (Hall 1991), enterprise in TAFE open and flexible learning (Mageean 1990), quality issues in TAFE (Hall 1992), and TAFE client satisfaction (Hayton 1991). These themes were used as a basis for *examples* in order to help the respondents to formulate responses to *issues and practices* within each set of *sites and venues of activity*.

The survey document therefore was a seven by seven matrix of comprising of two dimensions: *practices and issues*, and *sites and venues of activity*, with each cell having two or three examples of issues which were consonant with the national and international literature and the early fieldwork we had done. We were mindful that this strategy may have been pre-emptive and perhaps narrowing to some degree and tried to offset this by drawing people's attention this possibility. We advised participants that there may have been issues and practices—especially those unique to individual colleges—which we had not been able to identify. We also advised participants that the categories were not exhaustive or exclusive, and emphasised that the examples provided were merely suggestions, and that categories and examples certainly should not be followed slavishly. We told informants that we were particularly interested to hear what people have to say about issues of concern to them, in their own terms. We encouraged off-campus co-ordinators to meet with people in groups, to interview key individuals, and to provide us with relevant documents. We also asked co-ordinators to advise us about key people to speak with during our formal follow up visit.

The conduct of fieldwork

There was just one survey document completed by each of the six participating colleges. The Off-Campus Co-ordinator (or the College-nominated alternative) was primarily responsible for documenting views of people. One of the team then visited the College to discuss and confirm observations with the Co-ordinator, and with other relevant College staff. Where there was consensus, divergence, or any range of views whatever, we depended in the first instance on the documentation provided by the Co-ordinator. The researchers interviewed key participants, observed program activities, and analysed documents associated with programs with a view to identifying key program features which differentiate approaches in terms of aspirations and values of stakeholders, pedagogy and curriculum in action, and outcomes for students. Because of the condensed nature of the study, the researchers spent most time with Off-Campus Co-ordinators or their equivalents in each college. Their work on behalf of the project was guided by the structured survey document described above which elicited information from them, and guided their interviewing of participants and other observation on behalf of the project.

The issues generated in the study were therefore based upon data from five key sources:

(i) Survey responses, usually a compilation of interviews conducted by the Off-Campus Co-ordinator using the survey.

(ii) Follow-up interviews conducted with the Off-Campus Co-ordinators.

(iii) Interviews with other college staff and students.

(iv) Documentation provided by Open Training Services and colleges.

(v) Interviews with OTS staff.

The data generated were substantial, and provided a rich source of issues and ideas to inform off-campus teaching, curriculum, organisation and course development. The aim was to identify, largely on respondents' behalf, issues which were thought to need attention within colleges, and which also were thought to bear upon relationships between and among colleges, and between colleges and the state.

Anonymity

Individual informants and colleges were not identified. Information was collected from them on the understanding that they would not be identified. We asked Off-Campus Coordinators to anonymise informants in the data they provided to us. We recognise that this strategy may have privileged the perspective of the Off-Campus Coordinators as informants, but the triangulation of the survey responses with other college staff responses through interview and with documentation confirmed our own observation that our key informants had done a thorough and impartial job of representing views within the college.

The findings

The study sought to identify 'models' of off-campus delivery. We took the term 'model' rather inclusively to mean not merely what practical things colleges did, but their rationale as well. Our concern was not with individual colleges, so we undertook not to identify colleges.

We begin the presentation of the findings of the study with the 'self-descriptions' provided by colleges in response to the cues provided in the survey. It is perhaps important to emphasise here that the *survey* and the structure questions and issues raised by it focus the presentations made by the colleges. Further, not all of the data we collected is presented here. We have other interview, observational and documentary data as well as cross-college and system data which does not readily fit this category system, but which sharpens the issues which are sometimes rather indirectly referred to in the college accounts.

Cued self-description of colleges

In the sections which follow we present the data collected from each college by survey and follow-up interview. It was our initial intention that the data would be organised in categories drawn from the first named axis of the survey/interview matrix, specifically *practices and issues* to do with:

1.0 staffing;

2.0 teaching and delivery;

3.0 student support;

4.0 policy development;

5.0 funding and resource allocation;

6.0 course/module production; and

7.0 accreditation and credentialling.

However, because respondents did not discriminate as finely as we had hoped, their comments began to 'run out' against these headers in the later stages of the questionnaire. Issues were appearing more broadly across what we called 'sites and venues' of activities:

X.1 college student support and administrative services;

X.2 open learning/off-campus services and coordination;

X.3 course production and development;

X.4 school/department;

X.5 institutional and cross-college arrangements;

X.6 TAFE 'system'; and

X.7 teachers, modes of instruction and use of technologies.

For these reasons we present data provided by colleges and some initial comments college by college according to the latter categories. The cameos of each college are followed by the presentation of some overarching issues with reference to the 'models' discussed earlier.

College 1

College student support and administrative services

All staff associated with providing student support in the form of course enrolment counselling have teaching qualifications and are located centrally within the Off-Campus Centre. Academic staff from the Off-Campus Centre assist students with access to other student support services within and outside the College. Administrative staff are authorised to provide 'advice' by supplying

printed information to students. If interpretation or further advice is required the matter must be referred to professional teaching staff within the Off-Campus Centre.

Student support is provided through course information and advice on subject selection and enrolment. Pre-enrolment counselling is available to all students through individual interviews either in person or by phone. Administrative staff provide information as a form of student support; teaching staff provide advice. Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL) applications are administered by individual departments.

There are no differences between policies for on-campus and off-campus student support. However, there is no specific allocation of resources for off-campus student counselling.

Open learning and off-campus services

Staff in the Off-Campus Centre are appointed to permanent positions on a competitive basis from within or outside the College. Off-campus tutors are appointed from two sources: either from the teaching staff of the College, including part-time teaching staff, or from the OTS pool of network tutors. Local tutors are also appointed from the community should there be enough students (that is, more than six) to warrant this. Heads of Departments are routinely consulted in the appointment of tutors, though network tutors tend to be known to the Coordinator.

The rationale for the existence of 'open learning' is the commitment to provide access, to allow students to choose their preferred mode of learning, therefore to present open learning as another option for students. Commitment in this College is strong and longstanding and the College was one of the original Off-Campus Centres.

The College has a considerable cohort of mixed mode students who must enrol separately in the Off-Campus Centre and relevant Department.

The 'open enrolment' policy is a contributor to a low statistical performance rate, but the College accepts that this may be the price of providing access. College Management formulates this and other Open Learning policy on the role of off-campus services in consultation with, and substantially influenced by, the Off-Campus Coordinator.

Funding is based on historical performance of the Off-Campus Centre (that is, assignment return rate), and funding for off-campus delivery is a serious issue. The effect of the differential funding policy for on-campus and off-campus services is to restrict growth (and probably maintenance) of off-campus programs and to stifle development of quality programs.

OTS has no role in the management or coordination of off-campus services, and thus the programs are fully integrated with on-campus programs.

Course production and development

This College uses a team approach for course development. The team consists of curriculum development officers with editorial and instructional design skills, teacher-writers, and media production staff. Staff from Departments become team members in joint venture developments.

The Off-Campus Centre itself uses the team approach to course development and implementation of procedures. The Off-Campus Centre is responsible for quality control and the College policy is to evaluate each course every three years. The Off-Campus Centre used to link with TOCCA for this. Lately, since the closure of TOCCA, there has been less eagerness for course evaluation. The external prompt helped colleges to look at their programs. Now the Off-Campus Centre will have to align directly with College policy.

Since the closure of TOCCA there has been a reduction in subject development, and although this College has done some development, it and the other colleges have not been able to sustain the TOCCA rate of production and course redevelopment. There are limited opportunities for course development here so that complexities of project funding and management have not presented themselves.

The College cooperates with OTS in development of materials. The College structure links off-campus delivery with the course design and development unit. This gives the College the advantage of addressing local national and international training needs.

Off-Campus Centre and departments

Off-campus staff have a quite separate identity in the College. Staff development opportunities are limited. In terms of teaching and delivery practice, open learning is seen by most College staff as a second rate method. This is despite the fact that most off-campus tutors are practising teachers in the College. Mixed mode teaching depends heavily on existing archives of off-campus materials, but still off-campus teaching is held in low regard.

We find the RPL process is complex and time consuming because it involves both off-campus staff and the relevant department.

A common learning support unit is available to students who are enrolled in off-campus mode, mixed mode or in conventional on-campus mode.

The College is currently setting itself up for Quality Assurance (QA) assessment. One of the issues we expect to raise there and through this report will be that of differential funding for off-campus students. There is no incentive to offer high cost courses, and most course development will now only occur if it has some external sponsorship.

Institutional and cross college arrangements

There are very few institutional and/or cross college arrangements for staffing of courses, course delivery and course development. The role of OTS in inter-college arrangements is seen as communicating advice on courses and subjects which are being developed and to fund research projects. OTS does provide a little in terms of fee-for-service programs. Institutional and cross-college strategic planning is largely confined to annual plans to align the Off-Campus Centre with the College strategic plan.

All usual support facilities are available for cross college enrolled students.

The College is engaged in a small number of fee-for-service courses where it is free to select its own off-campus program and charge at its own discretion. The majority are Government funded courses which must be identified and be agreed to for delivery.

There are no joint venture arrangements in the College in which the Off-Campus Centre participates, but the College is 'internationalising' and it may be that the Off-Campus Centre will play a role in that. Little involvement is in place, despite College rhetoric about the Off-Campus Centre playing a key pedagogical role.

The copyright issue is a major problem. Colleges are held to ransom by being forced to pay for copyright permission and course materials which have already been developed at the taxpayers' expense.

TAFE system

The College has total autonomy and thus responsibility for delivery. Resource development is the responsibility of the TAFE System. OTS staff is responsible for development, distribution of study material and support for delivery in terms of essential items such as coordination of examinations and identification of appropriate tutors.

The centrally produced materials by OTS are readily adaptable and are the bulk of what we use. Previously centrally produced material (RMIT and TOCCA) was often subject to third party copyright. Those constraints still apply until redevelopment of courses occurs. The 'Distance Education Forum' is the only system-wide influence on delivery issues. It remains to be seen whether it will be as influential now that control has been devolved to individual colleges. It has been one of the strongest educational interest groups within the TAFE system.

There is now a policy priority on workplace delivery and working with industry. Heads of Department have the authority to negotiate workplace delivery and customise courses. It is hoped that off-campus staff will be involved actively in the development and delivery of the customised programs.

The TAFE System differential funding is a problem in this College. Students are not enrolled in off-campus programs as much. The practice of fleximode by

teaching departments affects significantly the recorded off-campus student numbers. Funding for off-campus teaching has always been partially performance based. The Student Contact Hour rate ($1.93) is reduced to the average assignment return rate (that is, 70 per cent reducing it effectively to $1.72). This adversely affects attitudes to off-campus study in the College (and elsewhere) for obvious reasons.

Teachers, modes of instruction and use of technology

This workplace is well equipped, but staff members have limited access to *new* technology. Staff are expected to and do undertake training in areas of new technology in their own time. However, there is a basic induction program being offered for tutors. This is sufficient for survival, but cannot initiate change.

Most courses offered in off-campus mode allow students complete autonomy to work from home. Some attendance seems to help students to keep going, but there are issues there about whether this reflects a need to improve off-campus support. Attendance at residential schools is required only in one or two subjects, a teacher's performance is monitored through student feedback and monitoring of tutor's comments.

Off-campus teachers are employed only on contract basis. Teaching in the Off-Campus Centre is not seen as part of normal teaching duties. This does not help its status in the minds of teachers.

College 2

There is considerable diversity in the College, exhibiting different perspectives and values about teaching and learning. The Off-Campus Centre itself is 'a distinct business unit and as such has the responsibility for targeted marketing that is specific to off-campus studies as well as the development of full fee-paying courses, or the introduction of new, government subsidised courses which may be conducted by the Centre alone or with departments or other colleges. A number of course teams have been established to assist in the improvement of services, peer support and the identification of delivery enhancements.'

College student support and administrative services

The Off-Campus Centre in this College is 'administratively driven'. That is, aside from fundamental enrolment support, most support for students comes from other services. The Centre manages sessional tutors employed in all off-campus programs not attached to departments. Counselling services operate during evenings and can be accessed outside normal working hours by phone. The Off-Campus Centre performs an advocacy role for off-campus students and provides pre-enrolment counselling. It also has produced a study skills kit for students and supports students when access to central counselling and support services is difficult. The Off-Campus Centre supports teachers through resourcing and

access to communication technology. Students can obtain support through a Learning Resource Centre.

There is a modest expectation that the Centre will provide 'off-campus expertise' to developments in the College. It does help with 'delivery enhancements', but this view is not shared by staff of some Departments who, through a diversity of funding and organisational arrangements, manage their 'off-campus' students almost completely autonomously. There is also significant distance education expertise outside the Off-Campus Centre. There are some moves to have some administration of these courses transferred to the Off-Campus Centre.

Open learning off-campus services and training

The Off-Campus Centre uses sessional tutors. Teaching qualifications are held by one full-time manager, and a part-time deputy manager. Administrative staff offer support to tutors and students. One part-time staff member with teaching qualifications takes some responsibility for supporting tutors and to identify enhancement possibilities for delivery of off-campus material. Examples of activities in recent times include: the development of 'learner guides' for two courses; the evaluation of two courses, one in progress and another being considered for offer; the establishment of a peer support facility; and some discussions about information technology network support for students.

The rationale for open learning here is that it is seen as supporting the development of the College. The College has a long standing tradition and commitment to open learning, and this is evident through the financial allocation to open learning for flexible delivery course development. Nevertheless, the financial support of off-campus enrolments per se is insufficient, the Centre works on the standard allocation of around two dollars per notional contact hour.

Course production and development

This College uses teachers and industry personnel for development of learning resources, but also uses courses developed by other organisations including OTS in order not to duplicate effort. Individual departments have the role of ensuring the validity and quality of course materials, and this sometimes involves 'customising' for clients. Other development team members include graphic designers, instructional designers and other technical staff (if required) such as multi-media technicians. Ultimately, there is a preference for College course material design, rather than OTS material. However, dependence on TOCCA materials for a majority of courses still exists. The College has an enviable course design and production centre which has direct relations with departments, and does not invoke the support of the Off-Campus Centre.

New material sent out to students has an evaluation sheet attached. However the response rate is reported as being very low.

Off-Campus Centre and departments

The off-campus tutors are appointed by the Off-Campus Centre on behalf of the College and thus there is little difference (if any) in status. A large number of off-campus tutors are working full time and may take on tutoring above their normal loads being paid on a per assignment basis (and perhaps augmenting salary by several thousand dollars). There is little off-campus staff development within the College. Staff development for tutors provided by the Off-Campus Centre based on a 1993 needs survey includes the Internet and Computer Mediated Communication. An orientation and resource kit for tutors is in development. The Centre also informs tutors about other college-wide professional development opportunities, and provides tutors with an off-campus, OTFE and college newsletters.

'Flexible delivery' is reflected strongly in the College vision and objectives at corporate and divisional level. Heads of Departments have had a strong input into the strategic planning for their areas of responsibility, but the status of traditional off-campus program planning in these considerations was not high. Off-campus students are a relatively small minority, and unless they can in some way be linked with the entrepreneurial and commercial activities of the College, will receive less attention. Quality of material by comparison with that produced previously by TOCCA and lately by OTS varies around that standard, except where external funds were made available. Generally speaking, during the transition period it has been difficult for the College and Off-Campus Centre to sustain the quality of information to off-campus staff and tutors that was possible when TOCCA was in place. Still, 'the restructure of the TAFE system has been extremely positive as it has meant a dramatic increase in the number and range of courses that are developed. Development is much quicker and funds are available for delivery enhancement and research. This has been historically minimal and difficult to obtain.'

RPL is a departmental responsibility, but RPL and credit transfer are strongly supported by off-campus staff and by materials supplied by them to students.

Institutional and cross-college arrangements

The College promotes courses through the media such as radio, newspapers, magazines (including industry magazines) and mail drops in designated areas. The Off-Campus Coordinator reported that 'at a corporate level course promotion needs to be further refined to expand on the forms of part-time study available; at the moment most people assume on-campus study when part-time study is promoted.

Cross-college arrangements are being increasingly utilised for commercial reasons and in cases where low or falling student numbers do not allow for individual colleges to develop and produce off-campus materials. However, there is little real collaboration taking place. One key issue concerns copyright: this has

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been raised as a potential inhibitor. However, the potential fragmentation of links between Off-Campus Coordinators and the effort to form links between departments which are entrepreneurial may weaken relationships between colleges, not strengthen them or their services.

Cross-college enrolment is difficult, because some colleges do not follow pre-requisite requirements.

TAFE system

Within this Off-Campus Centre the staff perceives that there are conflicting OTFE policies which influence staffing practices. While there is advocacy for flexible delivery, a natural offshoot from off-campus modes of teaching, funding for off-campus teaching is poor. The closure of TOCCA and the freeing of funds for development and research is advantageous, but there are some real issues to be worked through. This College welcomes the freedom to develop, partly because it has substantial expertise, is large enough to support development activities, and is well-linked to other industries (and institutions) for collaborative course development.

System policies are conflicting at times. This results in inflexibility at College level. For example, OTS is promoting the incorporation of flexible learning approaches and at the same time policies such as student contact hours and unit completion rates conflict with practices of RPL and rolling enrolment provisions.

Teachers, mode of instruction and use of technology

Collaboration between Departments and the Off-Campus Centre is determined by level of funding. 'Off-campus does not get much', so collaboration is difficult. Staff development offered by off-campus staff is being currently developed to include Computer Mediated Learning (CML), television broadcasting, and other technology-mediated instruction.

Some departments definitely need off-campus teaching and development expertise. For example, all new materials sent out to students include an evaluation sheet attached, but there is only one question on teacher performance. This is seen as inadequate and the Off-Campus Centre has developed additional evaluation questionnaires seeking feedback on the general services provided by the Centre (annually) and the tutors (twice per year). These are modest efforts but all that could be afforded because of off-campus teaching funding levels.

The College has CML in use and TV broadcasting is supplementary. Moves to support off-campus students with better technology include a CMC pilot which has funding from OTS and the College. Some tutors are internet users and submissions have been submitted for TV broadcasting support for two courses. Emphasis is placed on 'workplace' education and the use of new technologies for better funded department activities and more explicitly 'commercial' operations.

College 3

College student support and administrative services

Pre-enrolment counselling is available at the Off-Campus Centre in person, by mail and/or telephone. Study skills advice is offered at pre-enrolment counselling, through off-campus material and coordination. Tutors, in addition to teaching, provide study advice. Off-campus enrolments can be made in person or by mail. The Off-Campus Centre provides a focus for advice, counselling and enrolment. This includes a post-enrolment role for the Coordinator: learning support activities for students such as study techniques, research skills, 'independent/deep learning' techniques, assignment planning, examination study skills and library assistance. The Centre also offers 'brokerage' services to students better suited to, or already considering, other institutions and courses. In addition the Centre provides administrative support for assignment tracking, statements of results and the issuing of awards.

Departments provide specialist advice on content and subject matter. This reduces potential conflicts between off-campus staff and staff from Departments. This College has a similar approach and structure for student support and administrative services as College 1 on which it was 'modelled'. Administrative staff located in the Off-Campus Centre provide limited advice to students and refer students to relevant qualified personnel. Off-campus staff think that library support should be extended in order to provide for the needs of isolated students.

There is a modest expectation that the Centre will provide 'off-campus expertise' to developments in the College. These links are strong and strengthening as department staff develop flexible learning concepts. Linking is much more difficult in this College because off-campus operation is an 'outpost' geographically speaking and there is advocacy for off-campus devolution to departments. It is not clear yet how the College can do this.

Policy mechanism for developing student support is informal: it relies on personal links between the Off-Campus Centre and HOD's. Generally off-campus provides more open enrolment procedures because class size and staffing do not have to be considered. This means that departments can enrol off-campus students, but the Off-Campus Centre cannot enrol on-campus students.

Open learning off-campus services and coordination

Tutors are appointed from the College or from the OTS tutor network. Teaching staff from departments have extensive off-campus teaching experience, some augment their salary by up to $7000 per annum. The College is committed to open learning and distance education as this mode of delivery is perceived to be the 'best' way to provide education and training to a viable number of students. There is a longstanding tradition within the College to provide open learning and off-campus learning.

There is no evidence to indicate overlap and conflict between the services offered by the College, nor is there any evidence from which the effectiveness of the open learning could be deduced.

Mixed mode enrolment is within departments not the Off-Campus Centre for reasons indicated above.

One effect of open enrolment policy is that it becomes difficult to match system statistical requirements with College data.

Differential funding for off-campus teaching creates a 'deficit' view and seriously reduces abilities for R&D and course development. TOCSAS is still adequate, but may need some adjustment in future to accommodate new statistical demands on OTFE.

Course production and development

Staff in departments do not necessarily have course design capabilities and there is a need for a centrally coordinated course development unit with relevant expertise. The relationship between teachers, developers and designers in course production and development is guided by the Competency Based Training (CBT) standards. The role of designers is not clear. Developers map competencies and match them to the 'client'. Teachers are responsible for content and learning/delivery styles.

Departments are responsible for quality control and protect themselves from 'exuberance of wizzbanging' so as to achieve 'fitness for purpose'. There is no evidence that in the context of quality control ISO 9000 is used to achieve quality control. Course evaluation feedback is not transparent from the responses. Due to the different audiences from the traditional classroom situation, client relationships and usage of learning materials varies. Thus the College perceives that there is a problem in having single evaluation packages.

'Up-to-dateness' of material is an issue. The demise of TOCCA left a rich legacy of courses; the capacity of individual colleges to do their own 'entrepreneurial' course development as well as maintain the large 'stockpile' is questionable. In this College much of the expertise and hardware resource base for 'flexible delivery' development is diverted to other kinds of 'commercial activity' which is becoming the consuming ideology of the College.

There is an urgent need for policy development and review in the area of off-campus course design, development and delivery. There is concern about this throughout the informal Off-Campus Coordinators network.

Off-Campus Centre and departments

Off-Campus Centre staff feel that they are less highly regarded by comparison with their counterparts in on-campus delivery mode. Traditional class room teachers see distance education as a 'second best' option only. There is an important issue in the way teachers formulate their professional identities.

'Teaching', that is, performing an active and visible role overshadows the question of 'learning'.

There is an integration between various departments on the basis of joint projects. There are few planned and coordinated staff development activities. There is an expectation that off-campus operations provides staff development using flexible delivery mode for on-campus departments, however this is not an expectation that generates resources.

Off-campus delivery mode is seen in most Departments as different and thus inferior. However off-campus staff have excellent relationships with Departments, especially those which use flexible and multi-mode delivery.

Counselling for and decisions about RPL is the departments' responsibility.

With respect to quality control, there are some problems with material produced by and through OTS. These concern not only how up-to-date they are and will be, but also how well they can be adapted for particular students' needs.

The College receives more funding for on-campus enrolment, and this creates the perception that off-campus delivery 'does not pay its way'. This results at times in the devolution of student numbers to departments. The College does not 'disguise' off-campus enrolments to attract on-campus funding, but is aware of that practice at other colleges. In fact, the Off-Campus Centre currently sponsors a fleximode experiment at additional cost to the Off-Campus Centre operating budget.

Institutional and cross-college arrangements

Traditional face-to-face and flexible delivery departments have different views about pedagogy, teachers' responsibilities, power, control and assessment. The views diverge on issues of teacher-centredness versus student-centredness.

OTS is seen by this College as providing a focus for off-campus activities, joint ventures and for acting as an arbitrator and broker. Strategic planning in institutional and cross-college arrangements was perceived as being fragmented. It was suggested that different colleges attribute distance education a different role and varied status. This contributes to fragmentation of the system wide character of distance education throughout the State. This however has strategic advantages for some colleges and disadvantages for other. The competitive environment is a growing issue in relation to cooperation. Already some colleges are refusing to sell materials to others. Nevertheless, there are genuine issues of policy regarding ownership and traditional involvement and expertise which require some clarification.

TAFE system

There is less promotion potential for off-campus staff due to perceived limited managerial experiences. Off-campus delivery and operation is now notionally a College responsibility and thus there is no direct evidence of division of

responsibility between the College and TAFE system. OTS is seen as providing 'critical liaison function' and fulfilling a financial and course development role.

The 'adaptability' of the centrally produced material raises issues about copyright. With the OTS owned material this may not be an issue. The problem with copyright is perceived to be related to material produced by individual colleges. It was suggested that centrally produced adaptable material provided economies of scale which should benefit the whole TAFE system. How an individual department, college or cluster of these 'controls' copyright and the opportunity to use materials requires exploration.

Cross-enrolment raises some important implications for both funding and teacher identity. Some teachers fear reduction of traditional student numbers, especially as students choose alternatives to face-to-face teaching-learning methods.

Attitudes to off-campus delivery and open learning by the College executive are supportive, but there are many teachers within the College who are sceptical of off-campus teaching and open learning concepts. The TAFE *system* is seen as more supportive of open learning and off-campus teaching than the colleges themselves.

Economies of scale are supposed to come into play in off-campus delivery. OTS is (or ought to be) playing a critical role by providing a focus for professional development and for interaction between distance education practitioners, and others who might learn from their experience.

Off-campus students are treated as part-time students, thus are not competing with VTAC applicants, and they are being selected by colleges which is entirely appropriate given their special circumstances.

The biggest problem identified is that the system-wide, off-campus study is under-funded. Differential funding simply deters extension and further development of off-campus study, and also impairs thinking and development of flexible delivery.

Teachers, modes of instruction and use of technology

In this College the high cost of new technology militates against its purchase and use for off-campus course production. The College *has* multi-media production equipment, but the pressure on the College to become 'commercially viable' means that this equipment is used for commercial production activities which often have nothing to do with the teaching program of the College.

Staff development for tutors has been offered, but due to other needs it was not accepted as an important activity. Off-campus staff provided staff development in alternative delivery mode for on-campus staff.

The College offers a limited number of residential schools. These are received well by those who attend, but does raise issues about how 'off-campus' that mode of study really is.

With reference to teacher performance monitoring and support, TOCSAS provides information on distance education teachers, the Off-Campus Centre provides support. There is little evidence available to suggest that evaluation and monitoring is being implemented, or having an effect.

The differential reward system for on-campus and off-campus teachers might be overcome by paying the latter on-campus rates in the College. This would be an incentive for on-campus teachers to do part-time work. It is not viable to employ teachers as part of their normal teaching loads due to the unpredictability of students' responses. The strategy suggested may be the best way of ensuring the comparable status of on- and off-campus teaching (and learning). However, the differential award problem has not been overcome. The College pays normal Victorian TAFE Off-Campus Network rates for assignment marking and sessional rates for seminars. The Off-Campus Centre would like to be able to employ teachers on load if the College could establish an equitable formula which would alleviate the perceived differences between off- and on-campus practices and ensure quality attention to the needs of 'invisible' students.

Students need to 'learn how to learn' using new technology. Induction programs for technology based learning is urgently needed, but even staff involved in flexible delivery development in this College cannot always see the connection between off-campus approaches to curriculum and pedagogy and what they say they are doing.

College 4

College student support and administrative services

This College now has the Off-Campus Centre as a part of a larger training unit which provides training services. The unit is staffed with qualified teachers who provide advice or refer the students to the relevant Departments. The Off-Campus Coordinator provides most of the course counselling, but energies of the Coordinator are redirected away from off-campus teaching and advice because of pressure on the College to offer training services on a commercial basis. Formerly there was full-time off-campus operations, now less than ten per cent of the Coordinator's time is spent on off-campus work. Secretaries (0.5 and 0.4 respectively) administer off-campus studies.

Administrative staff support learning requirements of students and provide resources. Ease of enrolment is assured as the Off-Campus Centre and College Enrolment Centre are adjacent to each other. Pre-enrolment counselling is offered by the Off-Campus Coordinator and staff with the aim of discussing with the student the 'best' learning option. Study skill advice is available from the Off-Campus Coordinator. Teaching staff are more likely to urge students to undertake on-campus study, or at the very least mixed mode study. Responsibility for RPL

advice to off-campus students is with the Off-Campus Coordinator in association with Departments if necessary.

Open learning off-campus services and coordination

Appointments of staff vary between local College staff and network tutors; all tutors are appointed as sessional staff.

This College sees itself as small and for its off-campus activities the open learning option is often the only possible access to education and training. The staff is committed and dedicated to off-campus activities and open learning, but see open learning as a difficult mode of study. From a role differentiation point of view, off-campus delivery and open learning is seen as another mode of study and not as a different learning mode. Open learning is seen as an effective form of learning in line with traditional delivery mode. At the same time it is pointed out that open learning is not as effective as group learning. Students are frequently encouraged to steer away from fully off-campus study.

There are problems in the College with mixed mode enrolments which can be minimised with effective procedures. Issues arise about funding, who gets to count the students. Off-campus staff advise students towards mixed mode because of perceived advantages of class or weekend workshop attendance.

Due to differential funding off-campus students are seen as being second class. Teachers also think this way as they prefer personal face-to face contact with students.

Course production and development

Departments have limited course development experience. Course development is undertaken through a team approach using qualified teachers and course development coordinators. The vast majority of off-campus activity is simply TOCCA and OTS supplied materials.

The relationship between teachers and developers is somewhat tentative due to the limited experience in course production and development.

All departments are involved in quality control and evaluation of all modules is part of quality control. Formal and informal use of student feedback processes is in place, but course improvement is limited as little development occurs within the College. Policy changes are 'happening' and this is not as visible as it seemed to be in the past. The role of a college in course review is not very clear. The redeployment of funds that used to support TOCCA and college-based course development disenfranchises this small College which does not even have a curriculum officer or office.

System-wide production of materials provides for economies of scale, prevents duplication, and is essential for the College's survival as an Off-Campus

Centre. The College should be involved in 'local' projects, but this will always require financial support from outside the College.

Off-Campus Centre and departments

The Off-Campus Centre as part of a larger training unit is managed by one (0.1) person. The Off-Campus Centre is geographically separated from the College. Being a small College there are limitations to the experience staff can gain due to lack of opportunities and resources. There are grave concerns here that 'devolution' means that off-campus activity may disappear from the College's repertoire altogether. Already one college has refused to sell materials for one course so that it can be offered through this site. The demise of TOCCA and 'centralisation' was seen as a significant threat to continued off-campus teaching in this area.

The College sees off-campus delivery as a 'traditional other form' of delivery and on-campus teachers act as off-campus tutors for the Off-Campus Centre wherever possible.

Institutional and cross-college arrangements

There is little in the way of institutional or cross-college arrangements, though there was some in the development of one course. The College has some quite distinctive and worthy ideas about highly specialised off-campus courses (for example for farmers), but is not optimistic that these needs will be recognised.

TAFE system

Staff advancement and promotion is limited. The Off-Campus Coordinator has been in place for many years, and has sacrificed promotion because of interest in off-campus study. OTS staff are seen as providing extremely useful advice and coordination, but there are concerns that this may erode. The Off-Campus Coordinator regards it as vital that the TAFE system ensures that key distance education staff are employed and maintained at OTS.

The adaptability of centrally produced (or widely marketed) materials is being questioned. Indeed this supply of materials is all this College can depend upon, and the demise of TOCCA is a problem. This College sees itself closely aligned with former TAFE System attitudes to off-campus and open learning, and is apprehensive about its relationship with larger colleges which seem likely to dominate industry-based and flexible training.

The College's off-campus operation seems vulnerable because system-wide marketing practices are now non-existent. There are also concerns that a move to outcome based funding rather than enrolment based funding limits access, raising obvious issues of equity.

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Teachers, mode of instruction and use of new technology

Working conditions for off-campus staff are seen as poor in terms of physical environment. A new building is under way, and the Off-Campus Centre will move there. There is some staff development activity to encourage staff to use technology. However, funding is inadequate for staffing requirements, and staff development resources are very limited especially given the contraction of off-campus funding in this College.

What seems to be replacing commitment to off-campus is a workplace delivery policy, including the traineeship scheme. But within TAFE System adoption, as one training company put it, is 'haphazard and not thought out'.

College 5

College student support and administrative services

This College has no Off-Campus Centre in the conventional sense. All on-campus and off-campus support services are totally integrated. Every student is treated equally in terms of access and has a tutor supervisor irrespective of whether the student studies in on-campus or in off-campus mode. Tutor supervisors advise students on services available (for example, counsellors, social justice coordinator ...).

Enrolment for on-campus and off-campus are the same: standard procedures apply to both. Pre-enrolment counselling is available from content experts and course selection officers. This includes advice on study skills. The College is not monitoring the potential of conflicting advice, role duplication and gaps in student support and administrative services because there is no difference between students, just in the mode of study.

Student support is delivered by a nominated tutor: each student/participant has a tutor allocated. RPL advice is every teacher's responsibility. Policy on completion and enrolment is CBT based.

If resource sharing is funded by the system, the system owns it, if not, then commercial forces will prevail. This College sees devolution to college level and college entrepreneurialism as the key to the improvement of TAFE provision.

Open learning off-campus services and coordination

All staff are appointed on the basis of content expertise and report to the 'project manager'. There is a flexible learning coordinator who has the role of assisting departments to achieve flexible learning delivery and viability of programs through flexible delivery mode. This is mainly achieved through staff development. All resource implications are devolved to departments hence their decisions on response to client demands must be met at that level.

The rationale for open learning or off-campus learning is the supply of service to client demands. The College aspires to 'total' commitment to open learning and

off-campus learning is simply part of this commitment. In the context of open learning and off-campus services and coordination, role differentiation, overlap and conflict strategies are not relevant. The College claims a totally integrated model for on-campus, off-campus and flexible delivery of programs. The effectiveness of open learning and off-campus services and coordination is emerging. By choice the term 'off-campus' is being removed from the College's vocabulary in favour of 'flexible delivery'.

Course production and development

Course development is coordinated and managed by project managers who appoint course development teams from existing staff with clearly defined roles. Course production and development within the context of teaching and delivery practices is based on a team relationship between teachers, developers and designers in this College.

The term 'quality control' was rejected in favour of 'quality assurance' which in this College is part of the 'quality system'. 'Course evaluation feedback' is another term which this College rejects. 'Course valuation feedback' is part of 'quality assurance' which is part of the 'quality system'. Quality Assurance is affirmed as 'everybody's responsibility'. Use of student feedback is the tutors responsibility.

The College takes the view that OTS should be responsible for the availability of off-campus materials which are not the key development areas for a particular college.

The effect of policy changes including those about off-campus should be measured by the criterion of commercial viability. If colleges cannot achieve this they should 'get out of the market.'

Off-Campus Centre and departments

Due to the total integration of on-campus and off-campus delivery, there is no status differentiation between staff. Staff qualifications respond to the normal profile required.

Different values about off-campus teaching and open learning are seen by this College as inconsistent terminology. Here there is no difference in the nature of relationship between off-campus teachers and departments. Differential field rates for different disciplines is an accepted and valid practice, but differential funding for mode of delivery is unacceptable and this College partitions funds equally across modes on a per capita basis.

Institutional and cross-college arrangements

Cross-college arrangements do not apply due to total integration. This College does see OTS as a resource provider but which has no role to play in inter-college arrangements. Course marketing, profit sharing, and strategic planning in the

context of institutional and cross-college arrangements are seen as in-house issues.

The only constraint on college course production should be a policy that standards must be based on National Training Board specifications. Policies concerning collaboration are inconsistent with the commercial aspirations and then ultimately the viability of colleges.

Copyright issues vary. Copyright for 'contextualised' material is transferred to the client which then pays for contextualisation. Copyright for self-sourced material is vested in the college. However, it is not always seen as clearcut.

TAFE system

Advancement and promotion is on basis of merit. There are no designated off-campus delivery staff. OTS is seen as a resource provider. Differential funding is an outmoded concept, and therefore promotion prospects are made equitable across institutional modes of delivery. Any move to enrolment based funding rather than outcome based funding is a retrospective concept and has consequential problems.

The financial autonomy of colleges should not be questioned.

Teachers, mode of instruction and use of technology

Working conditions are the same for all staff. Technology is widely used and significant resources are allocated for hardware and software development. Nevertheless, resourcing is a problem at times because of technology incompatibility within the College.

Staff development is considered an in-house responsibility. Staff development for off-campus teaching/teachers is not considered as different from other staff development activities. This College does not see a reward system for on-campus versus off-campus teaching as relevant. This is due to the integrated approach in teaching. Teacher performance monitoring/support is seen as critical in this College which sees itself as a quality organisation.

The mode of instruction is moving away from print to new technology, but people still seek face-to-face contact. Residential schools, for example, are still used at the discretion of the participants and on the advice of the tutor.

College 6

College student support and administrative services

The College operates its Off-Campus Centre purely as a dispatch, enrolment and examination centre for OTS material only. Current staffing arrangements are under review. Staffing of the Off-Campus Centre is mainly administrative with part-time input and support from a teaching staff member. Study skill and bridging studies are offered through a separate department of the College in off-

campus mode. Resource allocation is historical and is detrimental to off-campus activities, under-funding them, or suggesting that students should be enrolled 'on-campus'.

The College has identified the need for a better support system, but has not advanced a solution suitable for its current structure. There is ease of enrolment for off-campus students throughout the year. Re-enrolling students are receiving enrolment forms automatically. There are restricted places for enrolment after October each year.

Pre-enrolment counselling is available and there is a high demand for this service as there is for study skills (which are available through OTS material). No issues in conflicting advice, role duplication and the like have emerged. RPL advice given by trained RPL staff.

The policy mechanism for coordinating services with services offered by the departments is driven by the Quality Assurance system of the College.

Open learning off-campus services and coordination

All teaching staff are either network tutors or College staff who can use off-campus tutoring as part of their normal teaching load. The rationale for the Off-Campus Centre is to provide access for small groups of students, which otherwise would not be viable in traditional face-to-face teaching mode. The College is committed to open learning and the Off-Campus Centre is thus seen as independent from traditional teaching mode. There is no role differentiation being reported and the effectiveness of open learning and off-campus services is reported as being high.

Policy formulation with reference to the role of off-campus services must specify a stronger integration into traditional teaching departments. This is difficult to achieve while differential funding for on-campus and off-campus services is continued.

Course production and development

Teaching departments develop their own 'fee for service' teaching materials. The Off-Campus Centre uses only OTS material and does not produce any other material.

There is no problem among off-campus designers, developers and teachers, because only OTS material is used by the Off-Campus Centre. These issues are resolved in the fee-for-service context of the departments. The role of departments in quality control is being reported as high but there is a need to streamline course evaluation feedback.

Although responsiveness of material to student needs is good, OTS should develop more courses. TAFE needs to promote the development of off-campus modules by its own staff. This will require financial inducement.

Off-Campus Centre and departments

The status of the Off-Campus Centre staff is unclear. Off-campus activities are part of a larger administrative unit but works separately, by delivering OTS material only. The main issue raised here is that off-campus and open learning needs to be seen as a method of teaching and not as a separate department. The relationship between off-campus teachers and departments is not an issue because teachers from within departments are often engaged to tutor in off-campus mode.

One area where departments and the Off-Campus Centre are in agreement is with respect to RPL. The procedure is too expensive and thus seldom used. Another area of agreement is funding. The off-campus funding model is not viable. The College has to subsidise it.

Institutional and cross college arrangements

There are no cross-college and institutional arrangements for staffing. OTS is seen as removed from day-to-day issues confronted by the Off-Campus Centre. Course 'marketing' is conducted centrally by the College, but there is no notion of profit attached to the Off-Campus Centre.

Strategic planning for institutional and cross-college arrangements is conducted at divisional level. In relation to cooperation with other institutions, off-campus staff take the view that more inter-college activity is needed for course development and adaptation. However, this does raise an issue about the traditions of the off-campus approach. In this College, financial arrangements for joint ventures are viewed as 'commercial arrangements' and are thus confidential.

TAFE system

OTS is seen as a provider of off-campus material, course and tutor information and as a provider for upgrading of study material. In this College, the adaptability of centrally produced or widely marketed materials is considered to be good. Cross-enrolment is not common in this College, and there are no issues or any real concerns about it. There are concerns now about marketing off-campus courses. There is no state-wide marketing practice.

There are concerns here about future planning for off-campus development. Devolution to colleges means that long term planning is more difficult. Attitudes to off-campus and open learning need to improve so that flexible delivery can become a high priority and be planned on a long term basis (that is, on a ten year projection).

Teachers, mode of instruction and use of technology

Off-campus studies here are exclusively OTS material based. These studies are not supported by technology other than the developed print material. Technology is being used only for 'fee for service' courses.

Staff development within the College is a divisional responsibility. Little staff development is conducted by or for off-campus staff. It is acknowledged that staff development is urgently needed for off-campus teaching staff. This College rejects the notion of teaching students how to use instructional technology in favour of 'developing technologies that are invisible'. Professional development is 'badly needed', especially with the drop in academic standards for TAFE teachers. Teacher performance is evaluated through student feedback, but reward structure needs to be focussed on off-campus delivery. Resource allocation for new technologies is an OTS responsibility, and there is a need for staff development to move into this area. This College has a commitment to the autonomy of off-campus students and accordingly, there are no residential requirements imposed on off-campus students. This commitment means that the new technologies are important in the development of off-campus teaching for the College.

Issues

The following issues were identified by informants, and summarised by the research team, especially where issues required an overview of the colleges studied and the sector to be seen and articulated. Issues as they were manifest *within* individual colleges are not represented in that way in this report. They are dealt with as issues which arose across the sample of colleges. Not every issue appeared with the same intensity or in quite the same form everywhere. By presenting them as we have we hoped to stimulate debate around themes in individual colleges as well as across the sector, without featuring issues which might identify particular colleges or informants. Here we draw attention to these 'empirically' established issues to inform and initiate a more theoretical discussion than the evaluation was commissioned to accomplish. The concrete issues (and concerns) documented were:

1. Off-campus studies are in danger of 'winding down' because of hidden dependence on the so-called 'TOCCA archive'[1]. There is some new course

[1] This referred to the store of off-campus materials (now managed by OTS) which had been developed for systemwide use before the individual colleges began to compete with each other for off-campus students. TOCCA was the authority responsible for all TAFE off-campus course development in Victoria before devolution of much of its work to individual colleges. Open Training Services maintains the TOCCA archive of courses, and acts as a 'course development' agency on a more or less commercial basis, but is supported in some of this activity by centrally provided funds from the Office of Training and Further Education.

development pursued with enthusiasm in some places, but renewal may be another story.

2. The negative effects of competition are already affecting the quality of relationships among Off-Campus Co-ordinators, and perhaps among colleges. This is a serious issue as the Off-Campus Co-ordinators' network is an educationally potent group across TAFE colleges.

3. Off-campus students are being advised to move into 'flexible delivery programs' which are heavily dependent on off-campus materials which have accumulated over the years because of centralised development. The reasons for this include:

   - Funding is more generous for students in this category;
   - Students 'survive' better if they have a social group to relate to.

   The strategy of categorising students differently has steered attention away from other solutions to student support, especially information technology (IT) approaches which ought to make physical attendance less necessary. The issue here is how IT can be used to create a social space which is at least as educationally rewarding for *students* as classroom attendance. This is a worthy aspiration.

4. In the fervour of *intra*-college entrepreneurialism, off-campus pedagogies (and pedagogical expertise) are not being drawn upon as they might be. Off-campus methods are thought of as 'second best' by many teachers for whom working with a class is a source of personal gratification and professional identity. It remains a moot point whether any or all students learn more, or learn more independent learning skills in this 'coaching' or 'motivational' mode of pedagogy.

5. Staff in smaller and larger colleges are wondering whether an appropriately broad range of courses will continue to be produced. Current indications and fears are that externally funded and popular courses will be produced (and perhaps compete with each other), while highly desirable courses (for example in agriculture) which do not have wide market appeal will be left unmade.

6. Smaller regional colleges fear that their supply of courses may dry up, or become less diverse as market force ideology drives production. They also do not expect to participate in development done centrally or in larger colleges. Staff are not confident of their capacity to write and produce quality courses, and do not relish subordination to a 'delivery role' with respect to courses produced in other larger colleges, a sense of 'elsewhereness'.

7. For smaller colleges in particular, there is considerable ambiguity about their place in market-driven educational provision. If distance education is just that, why would a college with a popular course 'sell', 'franchise', 'lease' or otherwise provide it to another college. Why would it not enrol students directly? Since large city colleges are more likely to be able to develop courses from a stronger financial base, can this mean the end of the involvement of smaller and regional colleges (and perhaps even apparently better placed colleges) in off-campus programs?

8. Services offered previously by TOCCA have not been replaced within the new structure. There is no general consensus about how the current system could be modified to improve the 'network' of off-campus operations. Views expressed included advocacy to incorporate some of the previous functions of TOCCA into the OTS functions. Others advocated that OTS should retain its current services, and some included the view that OTS should become commercialised, providing services on a needs basis.

9. The closing of TOCCA and the Victorian TAFE Off-Campus network has 'de-regulated' the off-campus delivery. This has led to variable models of off-campus delivery and different off-campus programs at TAFE Colleges. Students now have to 'shop around' in order to find the course and program of their choice. How easy is it for students, especially the traditional off-campus clientele to 'shop around' in the absence of a comprehensive directory and advice service?

10. Growth areas for off-campus operations are externally funded industry and work-place training. This is a particular subset of 'off-campus' teaching which raises issues about its impact on more conventional forms of off-campus study and its clientele. These issues include:

- Whether individuals or organisations are the clients, and how this affects content, quality, the relationship between education and training, and the relationship between teacher and taught.
- How a college relates to its 'community'.
- Equity and access in a commercial environment.

11. Current differential funding for off-campus delivery is causing widespread changes to enrolment patterns which will show up statistically as reduced off-campus enrolments. In fact, many of the students currently enrolled in flexi-mode programs will choose not to attend college and will be off-campus students, but will not be counted as such. Relating the current teaching load formula to 'flexible delivery systems' requires immediate attention. Funding off-campus teaching at equivalent levels is essential,

and indeed its current *subsidy* of flexible and other teaching and learning suggests that even more generous funding might be justified.

12. Copyright is a pervasive issue. There are complex legal issues here, but there is a need for some clear guidelines about how the 'sector' will deal with this matter which may become a significant impediment to students gaining access to quality (or indeed any) materials.

13. The relationships between off-campus, open learning, and flexible delivery are weakly understood and weakly exploited almost everywhere. The curricular, pedagogical and organisational possibilities afforded by the aspiration to make teaching and learning independent of time, place and teacher authority needs a significant staff development program.

14. Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL) is creating two kinds of issues:

    - Because of bureaucratic demands on staff and students it may be easier for either or both parties if the students actually completed the courses rather than seek credit for them. This is an absurd contradiction.
    - There are differences in standards of judgment resulting in course credit for students which other colleges are not comfortable with. There are dangers of colleges rejecting RPL credits given by other colleges.

15. There is considerable ambiguity about the appropriate role for Open Training Services. Staff in colleges are still very dependent on the 'institutional memory' of former TOCCA staff. In addition to maintaining the TOCCA archive of courses, there remains a substantial need for sector co-ordination. This role may include:

    - staff development for enhanced off-campus and flexible delivery development;
    - co-ordination of marketing;
    - commissioning research, development and evaluation;
    - studying the cultural shift to more commercial values, forms of organisation and practices and their impact on educational values, forms of organisation and practices;
    - dissemination of course information, including 'marketing';
    - nurturing cross-college (including cross-enrolment) arrangements;
    - supporting staff within colleges working to develop new pedagogies, especially those aspiring to enhance student autonomy.

Informants confirmed and validated these as issues, and found the notion of contestation among the 'models' of off-campus delivery we proposed to them a useful way of condensing the debate into the broader issues they saw impacting on their work. We present these models here as they lead into those broader issues and the literature which informs them.

Models of off-campus teaching

We elected to identify in the report provided to participants these 'models' of off-campus delivery as a conceptual and strategic device to label some patterns of contestation which were emerging in and across colleges. We took the term 'model' rather inclusively to mean not merely what practical things colleges did, but their rationale as well. Aspects of each of the models which take a somewhat abstracted form in our discussion were evident in more than one of the colleges in each case. No 'perfect' exemplar of the approaches described exists in any one college, but contestation among them was evident everywhere. We referred to each approach as a 'model' to indicate its abstracted character. However, we warned that the term should not be taken to mean that other practices should be 'modelled' on these as 'prescriptions'. They were distilled empirical descriptions with obvious theoretical, cultural and ideological referents and express reasonably concisely the evident tensions between educational values, entrepreneurialism and commercialism which respondents reported to us.

The pedagogical model

Off-campus teaching in the college is centrally organised, co-ordinated and supported by both teaching and support staff. It is pedagogical in this sense, but also in one other. The Off-Campus Co-ordinator is seen as an important staff and program development resource for the College in its movement towards 'flexible delivery'. The commonalities of purpose and substance in 'off-campus' and 'flexible delivery' are recognised, and the possibilities for new relationships among teachers, learning resources and students are explicitly identified as matters of policy and resource allocation. The Off-Campus Centre is a wellspring for pedagogical, curricular and organisational reform.

Off-campus teaching by local and college tutors or OTS 'network tutors' is monitored for quality by the Off-Campus Co-ordinator.

The instrumental model

Off-campus teaching is administered by a central office in the college, but this office provides no teaching or curricular expertise to students. Materials are developed elsewhere (TAFE Off-Campus Co-ordinating Authority (TOCCA)[3] for example), and their 'delivery' is the technical task of the office which hires local (including college) tutors or OTS 'network tutors' to conduct the teaching

program. Program evaluation and evaluation of teaching are internal to materials packages, or not done at all by the College.

The off-campus curriculum in this model is simply that made available from the OTS archive or produced by other colleges (or providers). Another way of describing this model is as an 'outpost'.

The laissez-faire entrepreneurial model

Off-campus teaching is devolved to departments. To encourage development, income differentials for different kinds of students (off-campus versus on-campus in particular) are ignored and pooled. Sections of the college may compete with each other and with other providers for 'market share'. The distinction between off-campus and flexible delivery enrolments is obliterated. Materials may be produced locally, or bought in. The 'market' is a key determinant of what is taught or produced. Competitive urge militates against the possibility of collaboration with other colleges, or other intra-college entities.

Off-campus teaching tends now to be workplace-based, and tailored to needs of organisations. Organisations are the clients rather than individual students.

The conservative entrepreneurial model

Off-campus teaching follows the traditional college/TOCCA pattern but with *teaching* resources cut back. Other areas of the college are involved in off-campus teaching, especially in areas where course development has been funded. 'Off-campus' is seen by departments as the 'administrative service' for some off-campus programs. Collaboration between teachers of programs and the 'off-campus office' is post hoc and primarily concerned with administration, because teaching and curricular expertise is seen to reside in departments.

Flexible delivery predominates in entrepreneurial activities which tend to be workplace- based. 'Off-Campus' as it is conventionally understood is expected to wind down as the college moves into a more commercial stance. The institution invests heavily in production of material.

Our purpose in presenting the models was to summarise the ways in which contestation was occurring for the colleges, to give people a defensible and reasonably straightforward language to engage their work. Our proposal was strategic in another sense: these concepts also provided a pathway into the emergent literatures about the 'privatisation' of education, its movement from public sector to private sector ethos, and the broader issues which attend this significant social, political and cultural transformation.

Scenario for action

For reasons we have indicated earlier, we did not make recommendations for individual colleges or for the Victorian (or national) TAFE sector. Nevertheless, there were college and sector issues which warranted attention. Key themes

concern funding, tensions between commercial activities and other TAFE aspirations across and within colleges, and staff development. These involve difficult times for colleges, but considerable progress has been made. In posing the issues above, we pointed out to participants that each one is resolved in one way or another in the everyday life of every college. Our aim in presenting them was to renew and inform debate so that the most desirable educational solutions are reached in each institution. However, we also indicated that each resolution itself was most unlikely to be permanent, and there is a need for colleges to reflect on practice in systematic ways. Continued contact across colleges at all levels was obviously necessary, but equally important was regular engagement with OTS, with the Off-Campus Coordinators network (including their 'flexible delivery' counterparts), and with other institutions and organisations with distance education and program evaluation expertise.

This action scenario required further theoretical commentary to inform the debate undertaken in colleges. In Chapter 3 we present in more depth some of the theoretical issues arising from the issues identified in the study

CHAPTER 3

Off-Campus Study Meets Entrepreneurialism

The chaos of operational definition

As we have indicated in Chapter 1, the fields of 'flexible delivery' and its precursors are a conceptual minefield. Our early fieldwork in the case study and earlier literature analysis confirmed that initial impression. Technical and Further Education (TAFE) systems in Australia used inconsistently and interchangeably a number of terms such as 'flexible delivery', 'open learning', 'distance education' and 'off-campus teaching, off-campus delivery', and the like. Under close scrutiny, these terms denoted various aspects of off-campus delivery modes. For example, 'flexible delivery' was directed at increasing access and participation for a greater number of students by supplying relatively fixed programs to various 'clients' who might be individual students, organisations or employers (Bowen 1992). Provision occurred at different times or in different places such as worksites, or on the campus of the college itself.

Another term used in troublesome ways was 'open learning. 'Open learning' in Australia once was seen as a similar form of course delivery, by allowing a person open access whereby the program or course has the characteristics of the greatest flexibility in choice of topics, time, duration, place and assessment (Johnson 1990, Jakupec & Nicoll 1994). That is, 'openness' tended to have an equity and access flavour to it. However, the term 'open learning' was used with quite different technical and substantive meanings. In general, meanings were confused because the term was used to designate traditional 'off-campus' study, considerations of access and equity, or features of 'flexible learning'.

The terms we are discussing have *deliberately* been made ambiguous too. In Australia, during the late 1980s and early 1990s a small number of universities were designated as 'Distance Education Centres' which were expected (and modestly funded) to conduct most 'off-campus' or distance education programs. The expansion of higher education opportunities in the late 1960s meant that several institutions, especially but not exclusively in regional areas, were desperate for students. These institutions were often established as the result of political pork-barrelling: quite substantial college building programs were designed to impress voters, often in marginal electorates, that governments were caring for them. Unfortunately, the building and staffing programs took little account of student supply, or student preference. Higher education institutions in particular needed off-campus programs to be viable, and developed them, sometimes well, but most often with very weak access to resources. Cut off by

the Distance Education Centre policy which denied them permission to operate such programs, these other institutions offered off-campus programs but called them 'open learning' instead to subvert government restrictions.

More recently, 'open learning' in higher education has been institutionalised as a series of educational television programs designed to attract students into fee-paying courses. TAFE colleges and systems did not benefit from political pork-barrelling to nearly the same extent, but cuts to funding in recent times have meant that TAFE colleges too have been pressed to become more entrepreneurial, in student recruitment *and* in marketing other services. 'Open learning' can mean anything from a commitment to affirmative action and access right through to the marketing of courses and somewhat crass commercialism.

The term 'off-campus' also invoked a multitude of interpretations. Within and across individual TAFE colleges teachers, administrators and students interpreted this concept with confusing and fluid emphases. Courses and programs delivered at a workplace were considered as 'off-campus', but so were 'distance education', 'flexible delivery' and 'flexible learning' courses. We were not the only ones to note the conceptual morass. For example, Bowen (1992) recently observed:

> [F]lexible delivery finds expression in many ways including [i] the delivery of learning at a variety of locations including the workplace, the community or the neighbourhood and at home, [ii] resource-based learning with tutorial support, [iii] the application of technology to enhance delivery or improve access opportunities, [iv] the extension of educational opportunities through access programs, second and third chance opportunities for obtaining qualifications and bridging courses (p. 47).

We became aware that the term 'flexible learning' was used in the TAFE vernacular to denote distance education and/or off-campus programs which were 'entrepreneurial' in nature. The terms 'open learning' or 'off-campus delivery' were then used for 'traditional' non-entrepreneurial courses and programs. Flexible learning was apparently a more marketable concept, and seemed to indicate to buyers that they had much more control over the college than they had enjoyed previously.

These broader issues warrant attention nationally and internationally, within the fields of vocational, technical and further education, and beyond. Key themes within the TAFE sector in Australia concern funding for distance education, tensions between commercial activities and other TAFE aspirations across and within colleges, and approaches to staff development. These involve difficult times for colleges, but these difficulties are not confined to the technical and further education sectors. The two profoundly salient features of educational life in Australian education are restructuring, and a profound shift in ideology and

role of the state as 'the nation state changes its mind' (Pusey 1992). Both features are expressions of the same tendency, the 'economising of education':

> Rapid and extensive change has been a feature of commonwealth, national and state education policies in Australia since the mid 1980s. And most, if not all, of these policy directions and directives have arisen from a strong sense among policy makers in education, and beyond, that the Australian economy is in crisis, that the economy must address this crisis by dramatically changing its modes of operation and organisation, and that education will play a key role in servicing and effecting such changes. Education is to be tightly, rather than loosely, coupled to the economy, re-shaping itself in order to reflect and promote new economic directions and imperatives (Kenway 1994, p. v).

This is not exactly an ideology-free zone; certain select political and economic agenda are served by such exhortations by the state (McTaggart 1992). And though TAFE sector history records a certain responsiveness to economic need, there is a substantive change here as well as a change in degree. TAFE colleges in particular, since their origination as 'Schools of Mines' for example, for years have seen themselves in a service role for industry (Jakupec & Roantree 1993). A somewhat uneasy balance has existed between this aspiration, local community service, and the creation of access to further education for early school leavers (youth and adult) and other groups such as people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The so-called 'economic rationalist' agenda is expressed in educational sites internationally guided by free-market revivalism drawing on the work of Milton Friedman in the United States and Austrian Friedrich Hayek in Britain. TAFE, influenced by the political enthusiasms of governments locked—perhaps not voluntarily (McTaggart 1992)—into that agenda has had to adjust to participation in market force positioning and the cult of entrepreneurialism. The management of the Australian TAFE sector has embraced 'free market' ideology with some enthusiasm, though perhaps like higher education generally had little choice as government funding per capita was systematically reduced and expectations about student load increased. As the issues documented here indicate, the conversion has not been total, and throughout these colleges the impact on distance education provides a way of focusing educational concerns. There is nothing new about the tension between educational and commercial imperatives, but the sheer extent of change is, as is its nature. Nevertheless, as Kenway et al (1995) point out, very little research informs the change.

TAFE colleges are now expected to:

- align more closely with industry

- orient activities to training
- train students to achieve nationally agreed 'competencies'
- identify competencies which are marketable
- identify market niches in which students might be marketable commodities
- market services (including non-teaching services) nationally and internationally
- attract foreign income.

How these expectations affect educational provision is already evident in one facet of TAFE operations, namely in the issues arising in off-campus teaching identified above. It is worth pointing out that the discourses, practices and forms of organisation in TAFE are quite unstable, so it is difficult to pin down what the settlements in institutional and sectoral culture might be. Nevertheless, there are some key questions to ponder in the TAFE sector and in individual colleges as they work towards some resolution of the issues identified. Of course, these issues are resolved in one way or another in the everyday life of every college. Our aim in presenting them in the evaluation was to renew and inform debate so that the most desirable educational solutions might be reached in each institution. However, each resolution itself is most unlikely to be permanent, and there is a need for colleges to reflect on practice in systematic ways. We present them here to open up a broader debate. The practical question concerns what might be the points of reference for such reflection in the absence of much research and appropriate theoretical deliberation in this domain.

Fortunately, we can draw upon Kenway, et al. (1995) for some scene-setting questions. Their work refers to schools in particular and to higher education in lesser degree, but the issues they raise are at least as pertinent for TAFE. It may even be fair to say that it is in the TAFE sector where the most profound changes in direction are demanded. While universities and schools are locked into the national agenda to improve national economic productivity and to make themselves less dependent on the nation state to continue their social and cultural roles, the aspirations for TAFE are much more explicitly that it change its focus to the national training agenda. Along with other sectors of education, the TAFE sector is required to improve its efficiency and effectiveness, broadly speaking to meet increasing numbers of students with diminishing resources (Jakupec & Roantree 1993). It is expected that this should be accomplished in an increasingly competitive 'market' and with no concession to quality or social cost. Implicit in this agenda is less attention to the role TAFE has played, for example, as a point of access to education for a diversity of disenfranchised groups and as a focus for social and cultural activities, especially in smaller and more remote communities.

About curriculum, pedagogy and student welfare in a market discourse Kenway, et al. (1995) pose the following questions from an educational perspective:

> Does the piper call the tune? How do markets shape the overall curriculum? What subjects do they privilege, and what happens to those of little market value. What view of knowledge and learning do they favour? What forms of assessment best fit, and is it possible for assessment to maintain its educational purpose? Do students become marketable and non-marketable properties? (p. 10)

Deeper questions about how education can become a market commodity in the first place must be addressed. This is not merely an issue about public investment in the infra-structure, credibility and legitimacy of institutions which now claim proprietorial rights over 'their' products. There are concerns about how certain kinds of discourse, practice and social organisation become mobilised, and how these interact. What impact do commercial infra-structure, ways of doing, relating and naming have on education? Is it any longer education? What are the relationships between commercial ethics and obligations and educational ethics and obligations?

There are some more abiding questions which need working through in theory as well as in practice if TAFE colleges are consciously and rationally to establish their priorities among commercial activities, and between these other educational activities which express social and cultural objectives of the nation. Perhaps commercial activities and a privatised TAFE sector will prevail completely. Some think that social justice can be achieved most effectively by the invisible hand of the market place, but experience in several contexts suggests to us that this is a fatuous notion (George 1988, George 1992, Bello & Rosenfeld 1990, Trainer 1989). Either way, there are some key issues of principle which need to be considered at the level of policy, practice and programs.

As Kenway et al (1995) argued, concepts such as 'the market', 'privatisation' and 'commercialisation' have quite different interpretations which have quite different economic, political, cultural and moral implications. Is it possible to think of education as a 'marketable commodity'? We, with others, for example, Watkins (1995), think this is an oxymoron despite the casual ease with which the Australian Government Department of Trade asserts that it is. But let us dwell on this terminology for a moment. If education can be a commodity, just what is it that TAFE is selling, and who are the buyers? Is the item of sale a 'service', and to whom? Or is the item of sale a competency, a set of competencies, an aggregation of competencies, competence in an activity, or is it a person who 'possesses' these? Is the buyer the student (or is the better term now 'client'?), the state, the community, or some organisation? If students are to become

'enterprising', is that a 'content-free' set of attributes (learnings, cognitions, skills, understandings, attitudes)? What is the content, and whose interests are served by it? Indeed, whose interests are served by any of these determinations?

Prior to addressing the questions, let us dwell briefly on the politico-economic underpinnings of the concepts and practices of commercialisation and entrepreneurialism. According to Pusey (1992) it is the neo-conservative economic ideology and policy that now extends with some variation of degree across the whole political spectrum. Privatisation and commercialisation are seen by neo-conservatives as catalysts for aligning the economy and government policy with each other. This alignment allows for a 'correct' allocation of responsibilities between the state and its allocation of public funding on the one hand and contributions from the free market enterprise and individuals on the other hand, towards education and training services.

In this new allocation of responsibilities governments in many OECD countries face a legitimation crisis and have realigned both policy and function in education, training, infrastructure and scientific research to give invigorated primacy to 'markets' as instruments of national improvement and in helping 'markets' to work well (Jakupec & Nicoll 1994). Prevailing is the neo-conservative view that governments can advance the 'public good' to some degree by contributing to vocational education and training, but dominating is a macro-economic policy perspective that the major onus is on the vocational education and training sector (in Australian context TAFE colleges) to provide services on an increasingly commercial footing to the national and global market. Thus Australian TAFE colleges must become 'entrepreneurial' (as are many other publicly funded institutions) in order to offset the reductions in public funding. The political argument for entrepreneurialism has two aspects: (i) there are compelling reasons to view public, that is, government), expenditure on vocational education and training in TAFE generally as 'a good thing' but which cannot go on forever, and (ii) that a macro-economic commitment to reduction in unemployment and increase productivity in a globally competitive workforce is the key to render more intelligible any public investment in higher economic growth and living standards.

Education and the Holy Grail

Taking the diverse allocation of resources and the neo-conservative macro-economic agenda into consideration, there are no simple answers to the questions about 'buyers' and 'clients', and the 'marketisation', 'privatisation' and 'commercialisation' of technical and vocational education because, like the nation state itself, the TAFE sector in Australia faces a legitimation crisis. On the one side there is a demand on TAFE to respond to the dynamics of free market economy and on the other side there are the bureaucratic shackles imposed by the macro-economic agenda. In response, some TAFE colleges try to ameliorate the

adverse effects (on equity and access for example) of the neo-conservative free market agenda. This resistance is an echo of the past and of the Pedagogical Model, and is sometimes expressed rather more mutely in the Instrumental Model as colleges depend on the archived courses (and values) of yesteryear.

Other colleges commit themselves to the new agenda, often with a zest which allows little time for the complexities and commitments of former roles and practices. This zest is fuelled from several sources. First, there is both willing and reluctant acceptance of reductionism. The intensification of work for TAFE educators means that anything which reduces complexity and simplifies the value domain in which education and training are conducted has some appeal. Second, there is a perception that recent economic changes are 'natural' and inevitable features of life in the global economy which 'works' with law-like regularity (cf Ormerod 1995, Bello & Rosenfeld 1990). Third, and probably in rare cases among educators, there is a belief that Hayekian principles *are* a valid way of enhancing social justice. The Laissez-fair Entrepreneurial Model expresses the new agenda most strongly, and colleges which aspire to it most completely see internal competition (for example) as an appropriate replacement for past practices, collegial or bureaucratic. The Conservative Entrepreneurial Model more cautiously embraces the ideology, and expresses its caution with managerial checks and balances to minimise the application of the ideology in the internal environment of the institution. This circumspection may be contrasted with aggressive market behaviour by the institution outside in the 'marketplace'.

Proponents of the Pedagogical and Instrumental Models see the entrepreneurialism and free market economy aspirations and practices as systematically induced disturbances of TAFE, whilst the advocates of the Laissez-fair Entrepreneurial and the Conservative Entrepreneurial Models argue against governments' bureaucratic intervention. In this view, government intervention is seen to constrain the entrepreneurial initiatives of individual colleges' and to weaken the capacity of the sector to compete with burgeoning numbers of 'private providers'. However, proponents of several different positions have apparently accepted and assigned to TAFE a relatively passive role. Thus TAFE has become unprotected in socio-political sense, finding itself cornered by the powerful manoeuvres of neo-conservatism: state bureaucracy coopted by transnational corporate capitalism with the rhetoric of free market economics. Old stakeholders emerge in a new guises.

TAFE has some obvious difficulties in legitimising its existence by trying to serve several traditional (eg students, employers, unions, community) and new identifiable 'stakeholders'. These stakeholders constitute historically located formations in multi-faceted contestation over new grounds of settlement.

'Society' was once considered a key stakeholder, but in the post-modern condition 'society' is as unstable a concept as the concept of the 'individual'.

According to some key social theorists (Habermas 1989, Beyme 1991) post-modernity and neo-conservatism are siblings. Under neo-conservative conditions, the state bureaucracy becomes a stakeholder and a competitor for power and resources rather than an instrument of the collective will of the people. By embracing the ideology of free market economy it reconstitutes itself instead as the instrument of transnational corporate capitalism (cf. McTaggart 1992). Thus the proponents of neo conservative ideology misuse the concepts of 'society' (and 'community') by confounding them with the nation state (and a supposed common national good) to justify practices intrinsically linked to of particular kinds in the service of certain somewhat obvious interest groups, the beneficiaries of transnational corporate capitalism. This is a revived version of the postwar slogan that 'what is good for General Motors is good for America'. Now the concrete identities of transnational corporations are submerged in, and *apparently* replaced, by a naturalised but abstracted entity called the global economy, the imperatives of which assume truth value, and cannot be questioned.

Against this background, the politics of training had to be reconstructed. TAFE had to face four effects of: (i) the reduced ability and inclination of the government to control external circumstances which affect TAFE, (ii) the belief in 'the economy' as a determinant of social and educational practice within industry and employer groups as a response to competitiveness on the global market, (iii) the weakened hand of government in implementing any macro-economic or social and cultural policies, and (iv) the influence of both concrete transnational economic forces and hegemonic beliefs about the inevitability of the effects of the 'global economy'.

Governments and the offices of the nation state are reluctant to recognise (and admit) that the direction of training policies can be linked to pre-ordained global economic and political interests. (Pusey 1992). Accordingly, and despite the patterns of contestation described above, it is the nation state itself which is trying to solve, deflect, postpone and hide these socio-economic influences by imposing intractable demands for 'training' on tertiary institutions such as TAFE.

The inevitable 'failure' of TAFE to resolve (or disguise) the so-called 'economic crisis' through an initial emphasis in the 1970s and early 1980s on state-sponsored training programs has led to more profoundly economistic expectations than those which the state originally sponsored in its own quest for legitimation. The nation state re-interprets its social, cultural and economic mission in terms of free market mechanisms. Consequently, and in order to accommodate the free-market imperatives, TAFE colleges and institutions have begun to turn away from both pedagogical and instrumental modes of educational activity to the laissez-faire entrepreneurial and conservative entrepreneurial models of delivery. By seeking 'entrepreneurial' and 'flexible' solutions, the discursive field of vocational education (in this case its formerly 'off-campus' aspirations) is made ambiguous and corrupted. Vocational education becomes

crude vocationalism and Hayekian capitalism disguised as national entrepreneurialism, as constructive, inevitable and desirable cultural change, and as a caring response to youth unemployment.

Within TAFE institutions are experienced vocational educators who believe that the ideals of vocational education respond to more than an external set of industrial and commercial demands and standards. For them, a 'vocation' embraces social responsibilities and considerations which go far beyond the basic requirements to work in a particular role or position. For these teachers, vocational education embraces a value system which extends beyond immediate workplace experience and economic expedience. The ideology of vocationalism attributes secondary or no importance to these value systems; it expresses economic values, for example, in the discourse of 'competency based training', and 'work related outcomes'.

The new vocationalism embraces fundamentally economic aspirations of 'flexibility' and 'adaptability', expressing an inevitable deference to economic values. This deference leaves TAFE institutions at the whim of interest groups for *economic* change, creating a *post hoc* rationalist approach to change. The fixation on growth and entrepreneurialism masks the destruction of social values once embedded in vocational education. To survive, TAFE institutions which subscribe to aspirations (or accept their inevitability) create their own interpretations of the new 'vocationalism' and follow a developmental path which is economically driven but of highly unpredictable social (and perhaps even economic) value. Entrepreneurialism has always been based on speculation—and in the post-modern TAFE college entrepreneurialism is based upon speculation about new 'products', new 'delivery technology', new 'competency based forms of training', new 'delivery locations' and new 'delivery processes'.

There is of course nothing wrong with the pursuit of new approaches, but this pursuit is down a very narrow path indeed. If TAFE Off-Campus Study is guided by *post hoc* rationalisation based on speculative activities in order to achieve outcomes which are 'profitable', its valuable and defining features will be eroded. The theory of vocational education which underpinned TAFE Off-Campus Study will be forgotten as institutions engulf themselves in speculative waves of pursuit from one 'profitable product' to another. The holy grail of 'profitability' *becomes* the raison d'etre.

Concluding note

Perhaps raising these issues seems like drawing the long bow in the discussion of a study of off-campus delivery, a small fraction of the activity of the six colleges studied. There was a sense of resignation among some of our direct and indirect informants, and among others a zeal for the new. The big issues pre-occupied some, the main chance others. Neither group has worked through the theoretical issues to which we have alluded. Speculatively, this may be due to an absence of

research ethos in individual TAFE colleges—an issue which we identified during the phase of establishing a framework of practices and issues and a set of sites and venues of activity. Be it as it may, we believe, on the basis of our findings, that it is time that individuals and groups within TAFE colleges did address theoretical issues, especially as the alarm bells are ringing in other sectors of education, and aside from some sporadic industrial action by teachers, there is very little interrogation of policy and practice in TAFE. Somewhat curiously, despite both theoretical literatures and government policy urging consideration of vocational education and training from the perspective of the new role of the nation state, issues of TAFE theory (and policy), organisation and practice are still viewed from the mind's eye of the *local* state. There is a need to (i) broaden consideration of the family of off-campus and flexible delivery issues to the national level, (ii) move beyond the micro-entrepreneurialism being expressed within colleges and states, and (iii) draw more extensively on theoretical work emerging, particularly analyses of marketing, commercialisation, and privatisation of education and training practice.

CHAPTER 4

Annotated Bibliography

This bibliography is divided into the following sections:

- Conference Proceedings
- Reports
- Staff Development
- Student Support and Administrative Services
- Course Production and Development
- Research Issues
- General Bibliography

Where there are relevant conference proceedings related to open and distance education in general which have been chosen to cite the citation and to give a brief overview of the context of the conference and the type of papers that are included. In the event that there are any papers that are considered especially relevant or any written by established experts in the field they have been annotated in the section to which they relate in the body of the bibliography. While these conferences may not be related specifically to TAFE, vocational education and off-campus concerns, there general relevance to open and distance education makes them important to this bibliography. Government and other institutional reports of a general nature are listed separately unless they relate to one or other of the specific sections outlined above.

Conference Proceedings

Atkinson, R. and McBeath, C. (1990), *Open Learning and New Technologies Conference Proceedings: Proceedings of the Conference conducted by the Australian Society for Educational Technology WA Chapter*, Australian Society for Educational Technology WA Chapter, Perth.

This is an interesting compendium of papers which explores a wide range of issues in relation to open learning in vocational education. Some would argue that there has been enough activity in the area of open learning and technology since the publication of these papers to make them perhaps passe. However the variety of topics still makes them relevant. There are several case study reports regarding the introduction of flexible delivery using different technologies.

Collins (pp. 81-87) discusses the implementation of a national curriculum in the metal trades using a modular approach to curriculum design that is nationally recognised. There are several papers that specifically examine the potential role of open and flexible learning strategies (see for example Widdowson p. 347; Foks p. 28 and Toussaint p. 305) and most papers offer an examination of the practical application and use of technology in vocational education settings. Most papers include a reference list. It may have been more useful if they were arranged in the text according to their particular topic area. A list of conference participants concludes the document.

National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (1992), *What future for technical and vocational education and training?* International Conference 14-18 December 1992, Melbourne, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Leabrook.

These conference proceedings contain a diverse group of papers that attempt to offer some solutions to perceived future directions in vocational education. While it is identified as an International Conference most of the contributors are Australian. Several papers present overviews of the role of quality management in TAFE and the perceived benefits it can bring to the system, several examine the idea of expanding intersectoral collaboration between TAFE, Universities and industry, and key competencies and women in vocational education. It is not specifically related to open learning in TAFE but still as a conference related to vocational education it offers useful insights and most papers include relevant reference lists.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority (1992), *Qualifications for the 21st Century: International Conference*, Conference Papers, Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington.

These proceedings offer a valuable insight into this interesting area of development in vocational education. There are several papers directly related to alternative delivery modes (see for example the paper by Godfrey pp. 367-394) and major papers related to Total Quality Management, Assessment and Competency Based Training that have implications for flexible delivery. Many papers conclude with reference lists.

Open Learning 94–Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Open Learning (1994), Queensland Open Learning Network and the University of Queensland, 9th-11th November, Brisbane.

The Conference proceedings are divided into several sections:

- improving the quality and effectiveness of learning for the learner
- research and development in open learning
- technology and its applications in open learning
- futures
- networking
- private providers, industry and government application of open learning.

Many of the papers are relevant to the practice of open learning in vocational education and training and several offer case study reports of collaboration between TAFE, Universities and industry. Many conclude with what could be considered reasonably useful reference lists. Of particular interest to vocational education are the discussions of flexible delivery and the use of communications technology and the papers that discuss the implementation of open learning into colleges with a tradition of face to face teaching. Several of these are annotated in the appropriate sections that follow. The proceedings serve to give the reader a view of contemporary practice in open learning in Australia in TAFE, higher education and the private sector. Importantly not all paint a picture of the glorious success of open learning and there are several papers that offer a critique of practice (see for example Lang, M., Brady, P. & Smith, R. *A large scale evaluation of distance learning via computer technologies that created mayhem*, pp. 187-192).

Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia (1995), 12th Biennial Forum of the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia. Vanuatu: September.

This is the proceedings of the most recent Conference of the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia. The Conference is held biennially and brings together practitioners, scholars and researchers in the fields of open learning in a range of settings including vocational education. The Conference attracts participants from within Australia and particularly the Pacific Rim countries. While there are also participants from the UK and Europe. There is an eclectic range of papers and several that relate specifically to the vocational education sector.

Reports

Bowen, A. (Chair) (1992), *Flexible Delivery: A National Framework for Implementation in TAFE*, Flexible Delivery Working Party, Queensland Distance Education College, Brisbane.

The report is the result of national investigations that occurred during 1991 and 1992. The report begins with a glowing statement of TAFE's existing commitment to off-campus and flexible delivery, where flexible delivery is defined as '...an approach to vocational education and training which allows for the adoption of a range of learning strategies in a variety of learning environments to cater for differences in learning styles, learning interests and needs and variations in learning opportunities' (p. 5). It is interesting that the introduction does not reflect the scepticism about TAFE's ability to function effectively in a dynamic environment outlined in Woodburne's report.

The aim of the Framework outlined in this document is to '...improve the ability of vocational education and training systems to provide quality products and services which effectively and efficiently meet the diverse needs of clients' (p. 11). The Framework is structured around several goals which are detailed on pp. 15-42. The Working Party discusses its commitment to monitor progress towards the achievement of these national goals. The 4 goals are to:

1. develop organisational structures to enable TAFE to meet the flexible needs of its clients
2. develop appropriate funding arrangements and performance indicators
3. facilitate cultural and attitudinal change which supports flexible delivery
4. provide support and development for staff.

Woodburne's (1992) later reports should be read in conjunction with this.

Brown, R. (1994), *Innovations in Education in Universities*, Community Colleges and High Schools in Arizona, USA.

A report on the findings of investigations undertaken in January, 1994 as part of a Project Fellowship awarded by the NSW TAFE Commission.

Conboy, I. and Dewildt, J. (1994), *According to need—A report to the Flexible Delivery Working Party* (unpublished).

This report details the provision of learning support to students as an integral part of flexible delivery. The models proposed were established from a comprehensive literature search, a series of small projects aimed at addressing

the learning support needs of particular client groups, and the experience of the project team. In discussing learning support provision the influence of the context (setting, numbers, resources etc), the forms of delivery available, and the management and organisational structures employed are all considered. Management structures and management styles for effective learning support are suggested. Bibliography included.

Dale, J. (1994), *Devolution of Flexible Learning into the Mainstream—a gradual approach.* Annual workshop Report of the Victorian TAFE Off Campus Network, Liaison Committee.

This paper discusses the evolution of the off campus delivery centre at Sunraysia College of TAFE into a flexible delivery model incorporating off campus delivery into teaching departments.

Dewildt, J. (1994), *Profiles for Flexible Delivery within Colleges: Choosing an Operational Framework: Developing Distance Education at Wodonga College of TAFE*, Annual Workshop Report of the Victorian TAFE Off Campus Network.

This paper discusses the approach to the development of the distance education delivery service at a regional college over the previous year and the models of delivery which were considered.

Flexible Delivery Working Party (1992), *Flexible Delivery: A National Framework for implementation in TAFE*, Brisbane, Flexible Delivery Working Party.

The framework has been developed by the Flexible Delivery Working party whose brief was to develop a framework for publicly funded vocational education and training systems. The framework seeks to explain the role of flexible delivery in supporting the national training reform agenda and establish nationally agreed key principles. The framework is one through which state and territory TAFE and training systems can develop innovative plans and strategies appropriate to their needs and the needs of their clients. It provides direction for national collaborative development in flexible delivery including activity at the national level to support state and territory implementation. In this context flexible delivery includes off- campus modes and addresses issues pertinent to college based off-campus delivery such as funding arrangements, cultural and attitudinal change, support and development of staff, and use of appropriate technology.

Flexible Delivery Working Party (1993a), *Flexible delivery: Learning Centres*, South Brisbane, Flexible Delivery Working Party.

This report identifies and describes models of Learning Centres suitable for the flexible delivery of vocational education and training. It also documents the need to develop learning materials and support structures for new and existing programs that include a broad range of delivery strategies including easy access to learning centres. The second part examines the features of a variety of learning centre models; single Sector Provider with local Management; Centralised Management of a Network of Learning Centres Telecentres/Telecottages; Public Libraries; Electronic/Technological Learning Centres; Mobile Learning Centres; On Campus Learning Centres; Workplace Training Centres; and Schools-based Learning Centres. Includes a bibliography.

Flexible Delivery Working Party (1993b), *Flexible Delivery: Towards New Alliances for Learning in Industry: A Report on Flexible Delivery of Training for Industry, Private and Non-Institutional Providers*, Flexible Delivery Working Party, South Brisbane.

The authors study the potential benefits of the use of alternative and flexible delivery techniques for training in various industry sites by various training providers–the study was undertaken across all Australian states using interviews as the major method of data collection. The Report claims that small business and small industry are not as innovative in their use of flexible delivery techniques compared to larger organisations. There are documented groups of what the authors describe as barriers to the implementation of alternative methods of delivery. These include:

- limitations of traditional mindsets
- insufficient awareness of benefits
- costs of learning technologies.

Others are summarised in the Executive Summary and outlined in detail in the body of the Report. The Report concludes with nineteen recommendations including the expansion of collaborative measures between the Open Learning Corporation and the National Centre for Vocational Education Research to develop strategy to promote research and development. There is a clear indication, as a result of this Report, of the Federal Government's commitment to expanding the role of TAFE in industry based flexible delivery of training.

Lundin, R. (1993), *Overseas experience in non-traditional modes of delivery in higher education using state-of-the-art technologies: Best practice*, Department of Employment Education and Training, AGPS, Canberra.

This Report was commissioned by the Committee to Review Modes of Delivery in Higher Education. The authors visited overseas institutions and reviewed 'hundreds' of off shore studies and projects over a 12 year period in order to analyse them and extrapolate the features of best practice in nontraditional educational settings. It does not limit its investigation and recommendations to universities. The recommendations are clearly elucidated in the Executive Summary and there is a specific emphasis on developing commitments across providers in vocational education, universities and the private sector for collaborative activity. There is a useful although not exhaustive reference list.

Mitchell, J. (Ed) (1988), *Report on establishing open learning at Light College of TAFE October 1987-September 1988*, OLIMCH.

This collection of articles by various collaborators presents case studies of different aspects of the establishment of open learning at Light College including administrative systems, managing change in open learning, and the implementation of open learning and flexible delivery in rural studies commercial studies and open learning in the South Australian TAFE system. This report is an attempt to take the reader through the major facets of the project, from philosophy, to costs, to resource implications to problems and the future.

National Board of Employment, Education and Training (1992), *Changing Patterns of Teaching and Learning: The Use and Potential of Distance Education Materials and Methods in Australian Higher Education*, National Board of Employment, Education and Training, AGPS, Canberra.

While the Report focuses on the university sector, Jack Foks well known in the field of open and distance education in Australia, comments on teaching and learning in open and distance education from the perspective of TAFE. His comments reflect an interest in the decentralisation of distance education practices within the vocational education sector in Australia and the emerging capacity of TAFE to '...provide more flexible client oriented education and training'.

Padgham, L. (1994), *Victorian TAFE Off-campus Network Liaison Committee: 1994 Annual Workshop Report*, Halls Gap, 7-10 August.

This is the Report of the yearly meeting of a network of TAFE coordinators interested in and integral to the provision of TAFE's off-campus courses. In her introduction, Padgham (p3) acknowledges the current activity in off-campus or flexible delivery of TAFE programs and asserts that there is scope to widen the range of courses offered in this mode. The Report documents a range of issues and draws on the experience of well established and successful deliverers of off-campus programs in states other than Victoria. Important areas of interest in open learning pursued in the document include the instigation of performance indicators (Scorgie p. 106), the practicalities of establishing a cost effective learning centre that promotes anticipated learning outcomes (Evans and Johnston p. 135) and there are several papers that examine various aspects of flexible delivery (see Crooke and Hird p. 68, Dale p. 52 and Richard p. 38).

Tierney, J. (Chair) (1995), *Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee. Inquiry into the Development of Open Learning in Australia–Parts 1 and 2*, Senate Printing Unit, Canberra.

Part 2 of the Report has a section dedicated to *Flexible delivery in the VET sector*. This section reviews the policy of governmental agencies both state and federal to the open learning initiative in vocational education (see pp. 12-48) which also includes a small section in relation to school based education. In essence, the Report recommends the establishment of a collaborative forum of education and training sector representatives to '...develop a national blueprint for the implementation of open learning across schools, VET and higher education sectors'. The Report recommends that the Open Learning Technology Corporation coordinates this activity.

Further recommendations are outlined in the introduction to the Report and are generally related to DEET funding arrangements, teaching and learning issues especially those related to course production and development and other administrative contingencies. The key assessment of the Report to which the recommendations are directed, lies in the recognition that open learning is successful and to ensure it can reach its potential contribution to education and training in Australia, there will need to be '...a major national effort to bring existing structures and policies into a coherent framework for open learning [which] will enable us to manage the many dimensions of education and training [to] which our social, cultural and economic aspirations logically aspire' (p. 74).

Staff Development

Gallash, P. and Davenport, A. (1992), *National Open Learning Staff Development Program: Modules 1-6*, TAFE National Staff Development Committee.

1. Introducing Open Learning
2. Good Practice for Flexible Delivery
3. Managing Flexible Delivery
4. Assessing and Adapting Existing Resources
5. Introducing Project Management
6. Flexible Training with Industry

This series of programs has been developed to assist TAFE teachers particularly with the concepts inherent in open learning as an innovative teaching and learning strategy in vocational education. The modules are designed for teachers and have been written in an open learning framework and are competency based.

It is not clear from the Introductory section in each module whether the modules are part of a mandatory staff development program within TAFE. They are structured to demonstrate the applicability of open learning design principles and are in a print based format. Each module concludes with a participant evaluation form.

McAleer, J. and McAleavy, G. (1992), Delivering staff development on special needs to vocational trainers through open learning, *Open Learning*, November, pp. 48-51.

This paper looks specifically at the development of an open learning course to facilitate the delivery of a staff development program to a group of trainers involved in teaching handicapped young people in Northern Ireland. The paper offers a useful case study analysis of the development and valuable insights into the rationale for choosing an open learning approach. The authors describe the teaching and learning strategies they adopted using multimedia and briefly review the evaluation of the program.

Woodburne, G. (Chair) (1992), *Staffing TAFE for the 21st Century–Phase 1*, VEETAC Working Party on TAFE Staffing Issues, St. Leonards.

This review has as its main interests the identification of key issues and options to be addressed regarding the future arrangements that TAFE will make

for its staffing. This is a lengthy report and takes an explicitly critical approach. It recognises several areas that require drastic reform, among these TAFE's industrial identity, a lack of incentive, rewards and recognition for competent teaching performance, the presence of short sighted recruitment policies, and importantly inadequate commitment to staff development. These are clearly articulated in the Executive Summary and the body of the report offers extensive coverage of the research data to support these conclusions. The authors acknowledge that there is a lack of goodwill, existing frustration and considerable divisiveness with the TAFE system. Chapter 7 (pp. 77-91) explores recommendations for reform.

Woodburne, G. (Chair) (1992), *Staffing TAFE for the 21st Century–Phase 2*, VEETAC Working Party on TAFE Staffing Issues, St. Leonards.

This Report capitalises on the high level of interest generated by the Phase 1 report and has as its chief objective to '...provide advice on how TAFE can prepare its staff for a broader more dynamic role' (p. iii). This Report is equally as incisive as the first. The Executive Summary is clear, concise and supported in the body of the document by an extensive analysis and exploration of how TAFE can improve its staffing and staff development to prepare those in vocational education for practice in the 21st century. It addresses such issues as:

- the creation of competence standards
- the need for career paths and the organisational internalisation of career development.

The report importantly suggests areas for prioritisation in staff development including the need to link strategic planning and training and development. The chapter structure of the report discusses recent developments in staffing for TAFE including an outline of National Goals and Objectives, a useful analysis of issues related to career development and a thorough examination of competency standards for staff development. There are relevant appendices and a bibliography.

Student support and administrative services

The Commonwealth of Learning (1993), *Perspectives on Distance Education: Student Support Services: Towards more Responsive Systems, The*

Commonwealth of Learning Report of a Symposium on Student Support Services in Distance Education, The Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver.

This is an extremely valuable document that evolved from a symposium in New Delhi in 1992 which examined student support services in distance education. The report discusses this in relation to the university sector, however the expansive literature reviewed makes it valuable for all spheres of post-compulsory education involved or interested in becoming involved in open learning and flexible delivery.

The document highlights at the outset some of the global changes in distance education and open learning that demand a changed approach to student support from an industrially based framework to one which allows a more disseminated style of student support. Such an approach recognises the importance of putting students in touch with each other and students and teachers in touch with each other. In a global sense, this has meant the evolution of a model based on study centres and communication networks. The document begins with a literature review which includes guidebooks and manuals about student support as well as an analysis of the academic journals that carry the literature in this field.

There is some differentiation in the literature reviewed of the type of student support that is commonly offered by distance institutions–administrative and learner support functions. The Report goes on to examine the literature in the context of institutional contexts for change in response to student support services with emphasis on organisational structures and operations. Curricular issues are also discussed and on p. 23 the authors discuss the elements of a responsive model including importantly the implications of an understanding of the types of students who will use the system. In summary, there are several major points derived from the literature analysis. These are discussed on p40 of the Report.

Cowan, J. (1994), How can you assure quality in my support, as a distance learner? *Open Learning*, February, pp. 59-62.

This is an interesting paper for several reasons. Firstly, the author writes from his experience as a student of an open learning program. Secondly, the author is the Director of the Scottish arm of the Open University of the United Kingdom. He describes his experiences of the learning support he has received as a student and manages to develop his discussion using this as a basis to examine issues of Quality Management in the area of student support. Perhaps the major contribution of the paper is its calls for less reliance on quantitative data analysis to direct student support services and his call for an expansion of more illuminative approaches to student support research.

Daniels, J. (1994), Open Learning and the National Targets for Education and Training, *Adults Learning*, September, pp. 22-25.

John Daniels is the current Vice Çhancellor of the Open University of the United Kingdom. This is an interesting paper that clearly demonstrates the parallel developments in higher and vocational education that are occurring in Australia, the UK and generally throughout other developed countries in the 1990's. While Daniels is concerned here with the implications of public policy for the growth of education in the British context, he offers what can only be described as valuable insights for the Australian setting. He makes many important points–one that is particularly insightful and important is that it is becoming '...more and more difficult to treat open learning as a distinct and special form of education and training somewhere outside the mainstream. That's not the way it is any more.' This should be read by anyone involved in implementing open learning in the current economic and political climate in Australia.

Goode, T. W. (1993), *Strategic Planning for Open Learning: a Study of Capital Investment and Planning Strategies for Alternative Education Delivery at Tea Tree Gully College of TAFE (SA) and Joondalup (WA)*, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Leabrook.

This Report discusses the evolution of these 2 Colleges as Centres of Excellence dedicated to alternative delivery methodologies in vocational education. Tea Tree Gully Campus has been the subject of several reports since its inception. The key focus of the paper is however not concerned with issues of teaching and learning but rather with the development of a strategic planning model that provides potentially more useful appropriation of capital funding.

The aim of the research underpinning the Report was to achieve some quantitative measure of how best to establish a balance between the investment components of building equipment, staff development and learning material into a coherent framework, given the Federal Government's expenditure of $100 million (at the time of the report) on TAFE infrastructure. This Report will be of particular interest to others in vocational education embarking on open learning initiatives in TAFE as the case studies of each College demonstrate that they are innovative organisations and the discussion offers useful insights into the key features that make them innovative and successful.

Lawrie, L. and, Predl, I. (1993), *A Framework for Management Development in the National Vocational Education and Training System: A Report to the TAFE*

National Staff Development Committee. Linda Lawrie and Associates and Ian Predl and Associates.

This report makes a contribution to the in reasing activity in the vocational education and training sector towards improving its management capability. The contemporary volatility of TAFE is recognised as the impetus for changing the culture of TAFE to make it a competitive organisation that is committed to building a client centred focus. This report joins many others that have been generated in the past 5 years. The focus of the report is outlined on p. 5 to:

- provide a planned approach to the acquisition and application of management competencies
- provide learning modes and environments which will deliver the desired outcomes, including for example formal management education, work based projects, action learning, return to industry
- develop a strong association between management development and organisational growth.

After a series of extensive consultations with stakeholders the authors submit a Management Development Model which they argue will contribute to achieving the outcomes outlined above. There follows some discussion of the key issues related to the way in which the model can effectively be implemented. The authors argue for a series of case studies to study the implementation of the model to gauge its applicability and potential contribution to the TAFE sector.

LEARN: Curriculum Services Division (1992), *Guidelines for the Management of Distributed Learning Resources*, Department of Employment and TAFE South Australia, Adelaide.

This study was particular to the South Australian context and used a survey questionnaire and case study interviews to identify some of the issues related to the accumulation and distribution of learning resources throughout the DETAFE sector in South Australia. The main impetus for the study was to ascertain the current status in light of the increasing interest in flexible delivery and open learning and TAFE's espoused commitment to be reconsidering its teaching and learning strategies within a framework of student-centred learning. The authors recognise the growth of open learning and the competency based training movement as the major changes that have demanded a reconsideration of the operation of learning resources throughout the system. Recommendations are made and outlined on pp. 37-38 of the Report. There is a call for further research and the investigation of the feasibility of managing the learning resources with an automated system.

Misko, J. (1994), *Flexible Delivery: Will a Client Focussed System Mean Better Learning?* National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Leabrook.

This document opens by discussing the vocational education system as one that is being driven by economic demands to become not only more adaptable but more client focussed. As a discussion paper it argues for considerable reassessment of the manner in which TAFE currently operates to allow for greater flexibility in delivery modes, delivery venues and assessment practices if it is to serve the needs of its current identified market but more importantly if it is to expand into new areas of practice.

Economic and policy reasons for such reassessment means implications for TAFE in relation to management, costs, teachers (especially in terms of change and staff development), administration and the conflict that the author sees between customisation and standardisation in course development.

The document outlines in several chapters many contemporary issues that need to be addressed by the vocational education sector if the challenges of the next 5-10 years are to be met. As such, it is a useful booklet–it offers a comprehensive review of the major educational issues in flexible delivery and argues strongly that TAFE needs to undergo a cultural shift. For TAFE teachers and others interested in developments in the area it is an interesting document.

Patrick, K. (1993), *Off-Campus TAFE Students: Report of 1992 pilot survey*. Victorian TAFE Off-Campus Network, Melbourne.

The key concerns of this report are student's intentions in studying and an analysis of the reasons why such students chose to study in the off-campus mode. The researchers used a survey questionnaire to gather data from students enrolled at 3 off-campus TAFE colleges in Victoria (Gordon at Geelong, Swinburne in Melbourne and Wangaratta in the north of the state). The response rate was 70%. The majority of students were above 32 years of age and half were working full time. Students indicated that the main reason for pursuing study was to gain additional qualifications and to enhance their promotion prospects.

Of those unemployed, study at TAFE was seen as a means of improving their potential to secure paid work. Interestingly, students commented that their reasons for studying in the off-campus mode were directly related to the limitations of job and home commitments that made it difficult for them to study on-campus. Rural students were most likely to have access problems for on-campus study. It is worth noting that the cohort was taken from a group of re-enrolling students who were already committed to off-campus study. There were patterns of differences that emerged between rural and metropolitan students, principally according to the author, '...off-campus study offers access to courses and subjects which would otherwise not be available to rural students: for

metropolitan students, it offers convenience and a degree of control over the timing and pace of their study' (p. 13).

Student Services Australia: Tertiary Research for the National Union of Students (1993), *Student Support Services: Management, Delivery and Effectiveness*. AGPS, Canberra.

The research that informed this report involved the usual data and literature search, a questionnaire of 253 provider bodies from 49 higher education institutions and detailed consultation with a sample number of institutions in the form of focus group interviews with student users and non users of support services, senior administrators and a student organisation representative survey. The research informs a report that has as its focus the University sector–this does not however devalue the contribution that it can make to those employed in vocational education settings. The Report analyses a range of support services not merely those associated with academic support. The key finding is that student support services are part of a quality learning environment and therefore the recommendations were related to the enhancement of student support to promote access and equity, to enhance academic success and to encourage the participation of all stakeholders including students, in institutional planning and policy development in relation to student support. Further detail is provided in Appendix A on p. 73.

Course production and development

Baron, J., Thiele, D. and Hintz, E. (1995), *Following the Yellow Brick Road: Implementation and Evaluation of Flexible Learning Systems at the Tea Tree Gully Campus of Torrens Valley Institute of TAFE*. National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Leabrook.

This report is the result of a 2 year longitudinal study of the experience of flexible learning at the TTG campus of Torrens Valley TAFE. The research used survey questionnaires and participant interviews of staff and students. The key findings demonstrated that TTG Campus with its charter to operate as an open learning environment had achieved many of the goals set in the planning and development stages. The Report suggests however that students attended TTG more for its location rather than its commitment to flexible delivery strategies in teaching and learning.

There was substantial evidence to suggest that in the setting of flexible delivery there still needs to be avenues where students can avail themselves of opportunities for personal interaction with teachers and other students in the form

of introductory lectures and workshops. The Report argues also that the student cohort in the second year of investigation had a better appreciation of the benefits and advantages of flexible delivery. Staff development was highlighted by the research team as a necessary component of the continuing success of the innovative activity at TTG Campus.

Blanksby, V., Lomax, K. and Yeoh, A. (1993), *Case Studies in Developing Flexible Learning Programs for Disadvantaged Students*. Victorian Centre for Flexible Learning, Melbourne.

The editors have drawn together an interesting array of case studies written by practising teachers in vocational education as part of a staff development program that was conducted collaboratively at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and Moorabbin College of TAFE. The main aim of the program was to encourage innovative thinking about developing learner centred approaches to teaching and learning that would be meani..ful for educationally disadvantaged students. The program, as reflected in the individual case studies, gave staff opportunities to research, develop and trial new materials and teaching methods. The studies provide a valuable forum for discussion of the diverse issues that need to be considered in the implementation of flexible delivery for this and other student groups.

Bruhn, P. and Guthrie, H. (1991), *Developing Learning Guides for TAFE and Industry*. TAFE National Centre for Research and Development, Adelaide.

This is an easy to use practical guide for teachers in TAFE and industry who are required to develop print based learning materials. The authors collaborated with experienced instructional designers and industry trainers in preparing the manual. Despite the recent and continuing advances in educational technology, course development for flexible delivery in TAFE and industry remains predominantly print based. While there are those who would see such manuals as too prescriptive and behaviourally based, others recognise that busy TAFE teachers have a need for some pragmatic assistance in alternative approaches to teaching and learning. The manual is set out in a systematic manner with clear direction for the novice and enough examples of features that are generally considered good practice in developing a learning guide.

Flexible Delivery Working Party (1993), *Flexible Delivery: Appropriate Technologies for Flexible Delivery, a Decision Making Framework*, Flexible Delivery Working Party, South Brisbane.

This handbook provides a practical guide for teachers and administrators in vocational education to assist them in the selection of appropriate technology to structure teaching and learning opportunities for open and flexible delivery. The handbook is directed particularly at beginning users of alternative teaching and learning methodologies. The handbook is supported by a computer program.

Lockwood, F. (1994), Effective and efficient production of self-instructional material for teaching and learning. *Open Learning 94–Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Open Learning*, Brisbane, 9th-11th November, Queensland Open Learning Network and the University of Queensland, Brisbane. pp. 15-20.

Fred Lockwood is well known in the field of open and distance learning. He is attached to the Institute of Educational Technology at the UK Open University. He has published widely in the fields of educational technology and instructional design. This paper is a useful summary of current thinking in the design of instructional materials. He isolates personalised training, workshop generated, text transformation, independent commenting and wrap around (where a study guide is constructed to meld texts, audio, articles to a complete unit) as methods or models of materials production that can be used in particular contexts. He illustrates the practicalities of each model with examples from his practice and concludes with a useful albeit brief reference list.

Lockwood, F. (Ed) (1995), *Open and Distance Learning Today*. Routledge, London.

This is one of the most recent publications from Routledge's well respected open learning series. In it Fred Lockwood has gathered together contributions from some of the world's best known distance educators. The text is conveniently and sensibly divided into several sections–trends and directions in open and distance learning, the student experience, information technology, the learner's use of media, course design and assessment, learner support and management, textual materials and finally evaluation and quality. Each chapter concludes with a reference list and there are many useful examples in case study format of the application of new technologies to particular learning environments. John Daniel has written the preface and claims that Lockwood's text is a '...handbook for

successful revolutionaries'. Certainly it is one that will appeal to all those educators in post-compulsory education interested in promoting flexible delivery and new ways of going about teaching and learning to achieve the best outcomes for students.

O'Hagan, C. (1995), *Custom videos for flexible learning, Instructional Educational Technology International*, **32**, 2, pp. 131-138.

This paper outlines the experience of one organisation in its attempts to be innovative in its teaching and learning strategies to promote notions of flexible delivery. It describes VESOL, Video Auto-Editing System for Open Learning, a means by which lecturers can control the videotaping of their own lectures as a means of expanding students access. The project was established to:

- avoid repetitive lecturing time
- allow the lecture to be reused using video projection
- enable students to access the lecture in a resource centre individually or in groups
- enable lecturers to develop material without the need for skilled technical support.

After explaining the practicalities of the system with the use of diagrams and descriptive text, the author proceeds to outline considerations related to staff development in order to encourage its use as well as more pragmatic concerns such as potential problems and ways of encouraging staff to use the system. There is a small reference list related to educational technology.

Open Learning Information and Materials Clearing House (1995), *Flexible Delivery Information Sources: A guide to Databases, Clearing Houses and Information Services, National Flexible Delivery Working Party*, Adelaide Institute of TAFE, Adelaide.

This document can usefully be used in conjunction with Werner and Cesnich's (1995) Directory outlined below. This guidebook is designed for all those involved in flexible delivery in TAFE and other vocational educational settings. It is arranged in 3 broad sections. The first examining course, products, methodology and delivery. The second, broader VET issues and the third, education generally. The layout is easy to follow with the name of the primary producers and the principle focus of the information allowing ease in finding material. The authors state that the guide will be updated every 12 to 18 months.

Perraton, H. (1991), *Administrative Structures for Distance Education*, The Commonwealth Secretariat and The Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver.

This brief review succinctly outlines the key considerations in establishing an open learning organisation. For those new to the field who require a quick, easy guide to developing strategies and structures within existing organisations of conventional teaching and learning then this is a useful framework. It draws on the considerable experience of Perraton and several of the world's best distance teaching organisations.

Rumble, G. and Oliveira, J. (Eds) (1992), *Vocational Education at a Distance: International Perspectives*. Kogan Page, London.

Rumble has published widely in the distance education and open learning literature, practices as an International Consultant in the field and is attached to the UK Open University. Oliveira is attached to the International Labour Office in Geneva. As editors they have drawn together a series of case studies that demonstrates the contemporary global activity in vocational education using open and distance education strategies. Contributors come from the UK, continental Europe, the South Pacific, South East Asia as well as South and North America. Surprisingly and disappointingly there is no contribution from Australia. Nevertheless the text comprises a series of case studies around the following key areas:

- broad based programs
- niche market programs
- case studies in the technology of delivery
- future trends.

The chapters are generally well written and offer considerable insight into contemporary practices in open learning in vocational education. The text provides an attractive reference list in a range of subject areas related to open learning and the editors concluding chapter is a comprehensive and valuable assessment of how VET sectors can further develop innovatively to meet the needs of the public and the state.

Werner, M. and Cesnich, J. (1995), *Flexible Delivery: Directory of Major Producers of Flexible Delivery Learning Resources for the Vocational Education and Training Sector*. National Council for Vocational Education Research, Leabrook.

This is the most recent publication of the Flexible Delivery Working Party. It is divided into 2 sections. The first lists *organisational producers* of learning materials used by the vocational education sector. The second arranges the material according to *subject areas*. The section devoted to producers is alphabetically listed and includes the name and contact numbers of the most appropriate person to reach in order to view or purchase the material. It is cross referenced. The directory is available as a print document and also electronically.

Research issues

ANOP Research Services (1994), *Young People's Attitudes to Post Compulsory Education and Training*, Department of Employment Education and Training, AGPS, Canberra.

This Report is subsequent to one that was conducted in 1992. The Report reveals that more students are interested in vocational education than the similar cohort in 1992. Despite this, there remains the finding that '...student's post secondary education and employment aspirations are unrealistically high, with the majority aspiring to higher education and professional occupations'. Reports such as this should be mandatory reading for policy makers in TAFE especially in light of the major changes to which the sector is currently being subjected. Furthermore, data that is available in reports such as this can assist in policy development–for example the advantages of flexibility in delivery modes is one area that could be used to target advertising to potential students.

Barnett, K. and Wilson, S. (1994), *Challenges and Choices: A study of four providers of adult community education*, Adelaide, National Centre for Vocational Education Research.

This research project was undertaken to increase knowledge in the vocational education and training system of providers other than TAFE institutions. Analysis of four adult education and community based providers of training included the changing trends in vocational training and in general course provision. The relationships with the TAFE sector are detailed and some mention is made of the role of distance education and flexible delivery strategies.

Billett, S. (1994), Situated Learning: A Workplace Experience. *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education*, **34**, 2, pp. 112-130.

This is an interesting paper. The author reports the findings of an evaluation study that examined the learners experience of workplace learning in the vocational field of a mining and secondary processing plant. The learning

materials were based in multi media and included text based learning guides, a computer assisted learning program, videotapes and also on site mentors and other workers. The paper would have benefited from a clearer explanation of the context of the program of study–it is not made explicit who designed the program and whether it was the first time it was used.

The discussion includes an analysis of interviews with participants and a useful discussion of the role of everyday activities in learning. A key finding of the study was the fact that the participants emphasised the need for the instructional material to be able to be integrated with everyday working activities. To emphasise this point the author concludes by stating that '...for situated learning to be effective, it needs to be embedded in the authentic activities and social relations which comprise cultural practice' (p. 128). This is of course reflected in the large literature of constructivist learning. There is a comprehensive reference list.

Butterworth, P. (1994), VET Research in Australia: a long way to go, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Vocational Education Research*, **1**, 1, pp. 19-34.

Despite the activity in all areas of vocational education and training in recent years driven by the National Training Reform Agenda, and despite the fact that such change is occurring within an educational sector with total expenditure of $6.7 billion, the author of this paper concludes that there is an urgent need to increase the profile of the quality and quantity of VET related research. The paper annotates a useful literature review of the type and extent of research that has been undertaken from 1988 till June 1993. The author highlights that the '...new developments occurring in the Australian VET sector are taking place largely in a research vacuum' (p. 33). The author articulates a convincing argument for the expansion of research and it is obvious that one area of research that demands to be explored is open learning.

The paper highlights areas that require closer examination:

- cross sectoral resource allocation
- quality considerations
- key competencies
- access and equity
- teaching and learning approaches.

Evans, T. (Ed) (1990), *Research in Distance Education 1: Revised Papers from the first Research in Distance Education Seminar*. Institute of Distance Education, Geelong.

Evans, T. and Juler, P. (Eds) (1992), *Research in Distance Education 2: Revised Papers from the second Research in Distance Education Seminar.* Institute of Distance Education, Geelong.

Evans, T. and Murphy, D. (Eds) (1994), *Research in Distance Education 3: Revised Papers from the third Research in Distance Education Seminar,* Deakin University Press, Geelong.

In its capacity as a major provider of off-campus undergraduate and postgraduate programs and as an international leader in the field, experts from the Faculty of Education at Deakin University, have conducted a research seminar biennially since 1989. These 3 publications are the result of the seminars and as such, reflect contemporary research activity in open and distance education in Australia. The texts provide a rich resource as the material is derived from practice and from various settings. Furthermore, for organisations interested in expanding their distance education and open learning initiatives, the publications represent examples of the best and most innovative research in the field.

Kearns, P. and Associates (1993), *A Review of Research and Development Structures and Practices for Vocational Education, Training and Employment in five OECD Countries.* National Centre for Vocational Education and Research, Leabrook.

The paper begins by acknowledging the paucity of research in the VET sector despite the continuing politicisation of education and the increasing interest in the contribution that the VET sector can make to social and economic progress in OECD countries such as Australia. The authors also recognise the lack of commitment to the formulation of policies for the progress of VET Research and Development (R&D). It provides an examination and useful critique of VET R&D in various countries that could inform future practice in Australia.

Noble, C. (1990), The management of industry training programs: a regional study, *Australian Journal of Vocational Education Research,* **2**, 2 pp. 88-101.

While this study is not related specifically to open learning in vocational education, it is of interest for its basis in case study research and its analysis of the way in which industry perceives its training needs. It has implications for the way in which TAFE perceives its ability to build collaborative links for education and training with industry. The research suggests that the capacity of industrial firms to organise their training needs '...depends on how the training function is organised' (p. 93). Importantly the study revealed that most firms regard the need for training as central to their business yet they did not seek advice or assistance from TAFE or the University sector to help them manage their training. This has

implications for TAFE and offers considerable guidance on how TAFE may be better able to market its expertise to firms such as those described in this study.

Selected Authors (1992), Special Issue: The Finn Review, *Unicorn: The Journal of the Australian College of Education*, **18**, 1.

This edition of Unicorn is a useful reference for the historical background to much of the contemporary activity in vocational education. In the setting of post compulsory education and training in Australia the contributors offer critical analyses and debate concerning a broad range of issues. The papers are in fact based on the Finn Review and offer careful and considered critical analysis of the Review in the context of the future of vocational education.

Timmins, W. K. (1988), *Cost Effectiveness of Printed Study Material Supplemented by Other Media*, Canberra, Department of Employment, Education and Training.

This study assessed the relative cost effectiveness of a variety of instructional media used in distance education in Australia. Print based media (study book and text books), computer managed learning, telephone tutorials and residential schools were evaluated and costed.

Toussaint, D. (1990), *Fleximode within Western Australia TAFE*. TAFE National Centre for Research and Development Ltd, Leabrook.

Evaluation in terms of cost, effectiveness and associated organisational and administrative problems of introducing fleximode to the WA TAFE system.

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Cheshire, C. (1994), College of no classrooms, *Australian Training Review*, **11**, Jun/Jul/Aug pp. 20-21.

Centre 42 began in 1992 as a computer-managed learning centre providing distance education for the School of Plumbing and Sheet Metalwork at what was then known as Regency TAFE. Since its official launch in 1993 as Centre 42, it has expanded into other areas, focussing on enterprise activities with industry. Foremost among these is the training partnership with Mobil Australia.

Deschepper, A., Greenwood, M. and Judd, K. (1993), *Open Learning Centres and Adult Literacy- A guide book for Adult Education Providers*, Victorian Adult, Community and Further Education Board, Melbourne.

This detailed guide is the result of research into open learning centres and the role this form of flexible provision plays in the delivery of adult basic education programs. It includes a practical guide to the operation of a centre that considers the details of client access and program development, the recording, monitoring

and evaluation of the learning program, staffing needs and resourcing levels. A reading list is included.

Locke, T. (1995), New External Studies Network in Western Australia, *Intercom*, 3.

Succinct discussion of the first stage restructuring of TAFE External Studies. Previously external studies was the responsibility of a specialist institution. The initial stage involves devolution of external studies to one college; a later stage involves devolution to a network of colleges.

OLIMCH BIBLIOGRAPHY Numbers 1-9 (1994), Adelaide, Department of Employment, Training and Further Education.

The resources listed in these bibliographies are selected from the collections of the Open Learning Information and Materials Clearing House, Adelaide Institute of TAFE Learning Resource Centre, The National Centre for Vocational Education Research VocEd database and the Australia Education Index. Most entries include a brief annotation outlining the contents of the resource and its location.

Victorian TAFE Off-Campus Network (1993), *Flexible Learning—Rhetoric or practice?* (unpublished).

This summary of a workshop deals with a range of organisational response to the shift in emphasis in the Victorian TAFE system from off-campus (distance) delivery to flexible delivery.

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